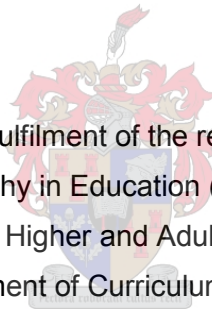


Exploring the experiences of women in leadership positions in Western Cape  
technical and vocational education and training colleges through a narrative  
approach

by

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy in Education (Life Long Learning)  
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at  
Stellenbosch University

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March 2017

## DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of this work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any other qualification.

Signature

René Bonzet

Date

March 2017

## ABSTRACT

The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (B 50B of 2013) states that 50% of those in decision-making structures should be women (RSA, 2013:15) for global alignment. In 2014, the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Research Agenda described the higher education staff gender structure as unequal. White male academics dominated key areas, and the management of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges needed to be transformed. Hence, this study set out to answer the question: what do the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape Province of South Africa tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector? The interest in this topic was informed by the dearth of women in leadership in these colleges despite the above-mentioned legislation.

Within the interpretivist paradigm, this study provided an insider perspective on women leaders' shared gender transformation experiences through a narrative methodology, by means of an interpretation of ten purposively chosen respondents' lived and told stories. The data corpus comprised digitally voice recorded in-depth interviews, transcribed verbatim and interpreted by means of a conceptual framework. Based on an outline of related literature, the conceptual framework illuminated themes to encapsulate gendered experiences of women in leadership. The data demonstrated that the respondents' experiences during their career as women leaders could be linked to these themes, namely the family roles and a professional career balance, three stages in becoming a leader, demographic influences, gender-related notions such as gender stereotyping and challenges, leadership processes and contexts, and strategies and initiatives to deal with gendered experiences.

The analytical framework illustrated how these themes were reconciled with a structured method of narrative analysis, namely a problem-solution approach, where raw data was also analysed in terms of five elements of plot structure, namely characters, setting, problem, actions and resolutions. Thus, aligning the conceptual framework with the analytical framework facilitated restorying within the bounds of a plot-structured narrative.

The results showed progress towards gender transformation regarding career progression of women leaders in TVET colleges during the past two decades.

Conversely, progress in terms of gender stereotyping, and men-to-women and women-to-women discrimination, was unsatisfactory and caused some women to abandon their ambitions, which may have compounded the problem of under-representation of women amongst the pool of aspiring college principals. The small sample size in this study precludes any claim that the conclusions refer to all women in leadership roles in the South African TVET sector.

Regarding the broader significance of this narrative study, there is still a great deal to be done based on gender transformation interventions to inform, sensitise, empower, and transform men and women leaders at key stages of their career pathways. Behind the reported narratives are the untold stories of many more men and women leaders in the South African vocational education sector, providing much scope for further research. This study therefore only serves as a point of departure in addressing all-inclusive gender transformation to the advantage of women and men in TVET college leadership.

## OPSOMMING

Die Vroue Bemagtiging en Geslagsgelykheidswet (B 50B van 2013) vereis dat 50% van diegene in besluitnemingstrukture vroue behoort te wees (Republiek van Suid-Afrika, 2013:15) om in lyn te kom met internasionale ooreenkomste. Die Navorsings-agenda van die Suid-Afrikaanse Departement van Hoërondewys en Opleiding het die hoërondewyspersoneelstruktuur in 2014 as ongelyk beskryf. Wit manlike akademië het sleutelareas gedomineer en die bestuur van tegniese en beroepsgerigte onderwys-en-opleidingskolleges moes getransformeer word. Hierdie studie het dus ten doel gehad om die volgende vraag te beantwoord: Wat vertel die narratiewe van vroue, wat tans in leierskapsposisies in TVET-kolleges in die Wes-Kaapprovinsie van Suid-Afrika is, vir ons oor gendertransformasie (of die gebrek daaraan) in die TVET-sektor? Die belangstelling in hierdie onderwerp is aangevuur deur die swak verteenwoordiging van vroueleiers in hierdie kolleges ten spyte van bogenoemde wetgewing.

Binne die interpretatiewe paradigma, gee die studie 'n binnekringperspektief op vroueleiers se meegedeelde gendertransformasie-ervaringe. Deur middel van 'n narratiewe metodologie word tien doelgerig-verkose respondente se geleefde en vertelde stories geïnterpreteer. Die datakorpus het bestaan uit digitale stemopnames van in-diepte onderhoude, woordeliks getranskribeer en geïnterpreteer met behulp van 'n konsepsuele raamwerk. Temas, gebaseer op 'n oorsig van verwante literatuur wat lig werp op genderervaringe van vroue in leierskap, is geïdentifiseer en in die konseptuele raamwerk vervat. Die data demonstreer dat die respondente se ervaringe tydens hulle beroep as vroueleiers gekoppel kan word aan hierdie temas, naamlik die balans tussen gesinsrolle en 'n professionele beroep, die drie fases op hulle pad na leierskap, demografiese invloede, genderverwante begrippe soos gender-stereotipering en uitdagings, leierskapsprosesse en kontekste, en strategieë en inisiatiewe om genderervaringe te kan hanteer.

Die analitiese raamwerk illustreer hoe hierdie temas in ooreenstemming gebring is met 'n gestruktureerde metode van narratiewe analisering, naamlik 'n probleemoplossingsbenadering, waar rou data ook geanaliseer was in terme van vyf elemente van 'n plotstruktuur, naamlik karakters, agtergrond, probleem, aksies en oplossings. Dus, deur die konsepsuele raamwerk met die analitiese raamwerk te belyn, is die skryf van 'n nuwe storie binne die grense van 'n plotgestruktureerde narratief vergemaklik.

Die resultate dui op gendertransformasievoortgang met betrekking tot beroeps-vordering van vroueleiers in TVET-kolleges gedurende die afgelope twee dekades. Daarteenoor, was voortgang ten opsigte van genderstereotipering, en man-tot-vrou én vrou-tot-vrou benadeling onvoldoende, wat sommige vroue genoop het om hulle ambisies te laat vaar en sodoende die vrouetekort in die leierskapspoel moontlik nog meer laat vererger het. As gevolg van die beperkte steekproefgrootte van die studie is enige aanspraak dat die afleidings verwys na alle vroue in leierskaprolle in TVET, uitgesluit.

Betreffende die breër betekenisvolheid van hierdie narratiewe studie, is daar steeds beduidende ruimte vir verbetering gebaseer op gendertransformasie-ingryping om te verwittig, te sensitiseer, te bemagtig en mans- én vroueleiers tydens sleutelstadiums van hulle loopbane te transformeer. Agter die meegedeelde narratiewe is die onvertelde stories van nog vele mans- en vroueleiers in die Suid-Afrikaanse beroepsgerigte onderwyssektor, met heelwat moontlikhede vir verdere navorsing. Hierdie studie dien dus net as 'n vertrekpunt om alomvattende gendertransformasie aan te spreek tot die voordeel van vroue en mans in TVET-kollege leierskap.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would not have been able to complete this study without a number of very important people, and would like to extend my gratitude to them for their unwavering support.

Firstly, my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Liezel Frick, for granting me the opportunity to realise my dream and never giving up on me. You knew when to push me a little harder and stretch me almost beyond my limits. Your patience, your guidance and your encouragement were the wind beneath my wings through this thrilling adventure.

Secondly, thank you also to Prof Eli Bitzer, Prof Magda Fourie-Malherbe and Dr Ruth Albertyn for their encouragement during the first part of my studies. Ms Diana Kruger and Ms Rhoda Van Rensburg at the Centre of Higher and Adult Education as well as Ms Sarie Wilbers at the Stellenbosch University library also deserve a word of thanks.

Thirdly, thank you to my husband, best friend and mentor, George Groenewald Bonzet, who had to put up with the messy world of my narrative studies for almost three years despite your own battle against myeloma for the past nine years. You taught me the true meaning of the notion, *vasbyt*. For you, no race was ever too tough.

Fourthly, thank you to my son, Ewald Bonzet (22), for loving me unconditionally and allowing me into your world of being a B.Accounting student. I treasure the memories of us studying together and enjoying numerous midnight snacks during study breaks.

Fifthly, thank you to my parents for love, opportunities, time and money you invested in my education. Thank you to my sisters and my friends who shared in my excitement and my frustration and who listened to my continuous stories about the study.

Penultimately, my sincerest gratitude to Dr Cathy Robertson, a dear friend and mentor, who believed in me, inspired and encouraged me to take up this study. Thank you also for doing the external auditing of the study and editing the language of the final text.

Lastly, thank you to my ten respondents, all my ex-colleagues and friends in the TVET college sector, including the college where I was employed at the time of the study. Without each and every one of you, this study would not have been possible.

Most importantly, thank you to my Heavenly Father who guided me every step of the way.

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## ACRONYMS

CASEA	Canadian Association of Studies in Educational Administration
CEO	Chief executive officer
DHET	South African Department of Higher Education and Training
FE	Further Education
FET	Further education and training
FETC	Further education and training college
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SETA	Sector education and training authority
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

## LIST OF ADDENDA

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# CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Promoting the cause of women in leadership has received attention internationally. Beckton (2013:2) argues that the future of innovation in Canada is in jeopardy due to an under-representation of women leaders. Since Norway introduced gender quotas (2003), women in top positions increased by 24% within four years (Dlamini, 2013:165). Spain, France, Iceland, and the Netherlands followed suit in promoting gender equality in leadership positions (Pande & Ford 2011:10).

Within the national context, the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa's (BWASA) census (Durheim, Maphisa & Priester, 2012:23) found that women were under-represented in positions such as chief executive officers (henceforth, CEOs) and managing directors (3.6%), chairpersons (5.5%), directors (17.1%), and executive managers (21.4%). Also, three years later, the BWASA census (Oberholster, 2015:21) did not show a major statistical increase in the positions of CEOs and managing directors (2.4%), chairpersons (9.2%), directors (21.8%), and executive managers (29.3%). Government data reflect a more promising picture. The 2011 Cabinet comprised 14 women ministers and 14 deputies from a total of 66 (42%). Women in government departments amounted to 58.9%, although women at senior management level in parliament were still under-represented (35.4%) (Durheim *et al.*, 2012:77). Moreover, Cabinet statistics in 2015 were less promising with no significant increase except for women deputy ministers. Women ministers comprised 41% of the Cabinet, while women deputy ministers increased to 47% of the entire number of deputies and there was a 41% representation of women in the National Assembly (RSA, 2015).

The national and international focus on gender equity and redress has also permeated the policy realm in South Africa. The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (B 50B of 2013) states that 50% of those in decision-making structures should be women (RSA, 2013:15) to comply with international commitments. Examples of such commitments within the African context are the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (RSA, 2013:4) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development (*ibid.*).

However, these national and international advances in gender transformation do not seem to adequately permeate the education sector across the globe. Notwithstanding legislation and policy initiatives regarding gender equality, Yeakey, Johnson and Adkinson (1986:120), and more recently Leathwood (2011:30), note that the number of women in educational leadership positions in the United States of America (USA), Sweden, and Great Britain do not increase in accordance with these policies.

In the vocational education sector, by the year 2011, only 23% of college presidents in the USA were women (Moltz, 2011). Studies in the United Kingdom identified further education (FE) leadership as “overwhelmingly white and male” (Walker, 2013:23). A report on gender equality indicators done by the Social Innovation Fund in Kaunas, Lithuania (Mecajeva & Cartwright, 2007) found that the number of women leaders decreased the more senior the position became. A mere 27% of women are involved in research and development in the European Union (*ibid.*).

Blackmore (2005:134) says that qualified women still face discrimination. In Australian universities, the male-dominated leadership cadre seems to exclude women, often in subtle ways such as denying them a superior office. Tessens, Web and White (2011) state that only 19.1% of senior academic women in higher education (HE) in Australia are professors, and these women are challenged to thrive within the predominantly masculine organisational culture despite affirmative action policies. Members of the Canadian Association of Studies in Educational Administration (CASEA) comprise “almost entirely white males” (Wallace & Wallin, 2015:423). The equity profile of women in leadership positions in higher education is thus not encouraging.

Various scholars have tried to find possible explanations for these equity deficits. Blackmore (1999:222) claims that “perhaps the focus upon leadership is itself the biggest barrier to gender equality”, while (Bourdieu (2001:11) argues that traditional labour division benefits men at the expense of women when it comes to equality issues. There are, however, no conclusive answers across the board for all sectors and nationalities, and contextualised interpretations of localised issues are warranted. This study therefore sets out to explore the gender transformation experiences of



women leaders in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)<sup>1</sup> colleges in the Western Cape through a narrative approach. This exploration could contribute to the continued gender transformation discourses regarding TVET college leadership in South Africa. Thus, in order to delineate the problem statement, the next section of this chapter will first outline the motivation for the proposed study.

## 1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

International trends such as globalisation, internationalisation, and massification have also had an influence on TVET colleges. Such trends create challenges for transformation in the TVET sector (Robertson, 2015:2). The South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Research Agenda (DHET, 2014:10) states that the higher education staff composition is still “racially skewed, with white male academics dominating key areas” and that the management of TVET colleges should be transformed (*ibid.*). These policy developments in the South African context are relatively recent. This study is therefore timely as it aims to explore gendered experiences of women leaders in TVET colleges.

TVET colleges have, furthermore, not received adequate scholarly attention nationally (Asmal, 2003; Kraak, 2012; Robertson, 2015:35) and, furthermore, scholarly international literature in this context is also limited (McGrath, 2005:1; Walker, 2013:215). Despite this paucity of research-based knowledge in the sector, we do know that by the year 2000, men occupied 85% of the then Further Education and Training colleges’ (FETCs)<sup>2</sup> senior posts in the Western Cape (Van Der Merwe,

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<sup>1</sup> The Further Education and Training (FET) Act, No 98 of 1998 (RSA, 1998a) led to the then 152 technical colleges merging to become 50 FET colleges in 2002 (NDoE, 2007:4). In 2009, former DHET minister, Naledi Pandor, started the transfer of provincial colleges to becoming national competencies.

A memorandum of understanding between DHET and the provincial departments addressed the transfer, interim governance (college councils) and college management (Western Cape Education Department, 2012:10). The transfer occurred in April 2014 and the current DHET minister, Blade Nzimande, renamed FET TVET colleges (RSA, 2013b).

<sup>2</sup> With the passing of the FETC Amendment Bill (B24, 2012), public FET colleges were renamed Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVET colleges) to strategically overhaul and

2000:79), the same context in which this study was situated. Approximately 13 years later and despite the above-mentioned legislation (RSA, 2013a:15), only 32% of TVET college principals were women (DHET, 2015:32). In September 2015, this percentage changed to 50% when the third women principal in the Western Cape was appointed at South Cape TVET College, although the rest of senior management, also under investigation in this study, is still male-dominated (see criteria for the selection of respondents further down in this chapter, section 1.4, second paragraph). These numbers provide an indication of the lack of gender equality and women's career progression in the TVET context, but only in part. Dlamini (2013:1) found that in-depth studies of South African women leaders' life stories are limited. Such studies can give women a voice and are a richer source of information than is possible through only statistical means. There is a need to uncover what may prevent women in TVET colleges from reaching top leadership positions. Presently, we do not know why women are not participating equally in TVET leadership.

Hence, this study sets out to investigate gendered experiences of women currently in leadership positions in the Western Cape public TVET college sector through a narrative approach. Tierney (2002:389) argues that researchers who pursue a narrative approach, capture the reader's imagination by portraying stories in a way that puts the reader in the respondent's shoes. Also, numerous narrative studies reveal that features of particular literary genres (for example metaphor, image and character) deal with the intricacy and enormity of human experience (*ibid.*). Narratives create realities; they provide access to comprehending fragments of others' lives (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008:14). In the case of this study, they were the experiences of women in leadership positions in the Western Cape public TVET college sector. Squire *et al.* (2008:10) highlight the centrality of researchers' interpretations of respondents' narrative experiences as part of understanding transformation: "Transformation – meaning, not always, but frequently, improvement – is also assumed to be integral to narrative: in the story itself; in the lives of those

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strengthen the SA post-school educational system, turning colleges into attractive institutions of choice for school leavers (RSA, 2013b:xii)

telling it; even in researchers' own understandings of it." This study does not aim to bring about gender transformation in the TVET sector through the study itself, but rather provides a contextualised interpretation of gender transformation (or the lack thereof) as experienced by the respondents themselves and forms a key consideration given the context of this study as discussed above. In other words, special attention was given to the story of gender transformation in the respondents' narratives to interpret and tell the overarching story of their experiences of gender transformation (or the dearth thereof) in the TVET sector in the Western Cape.

As a consequence of the above-mentioned motivation and the identified gap in research, it was possible to formulate the problem statement and subsequent research questions below.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The problem investigated in this study pertained to the under-representation of women at leadership level in TVET colleges around the beginning of 2015, particularly in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Against this background, the research question was therefore:

*What do the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector?*

The subsidiary questions were:

- 1.3.1. What were respondents' general experiences in their roles as leaders in the TVET college sector in the Western Cape?
- 1.3.2. How did gender transformation affect respondents in their career progression (if at all)?
- 1.3.3. What strategies did respondents adopt to deal with gender-related issues?

For the purpose of this study, a narrative approach was selected as a suitable methodology coupled with interviews for data collection, which is explained briefly in the next section (more detail is provided in Chapter 3 of this thesis).

## 1.4 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY STRATEGIES

An inductive approach was followed by means of an empirical study within an interpretivist paradigm, using primary data (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2005:19). A narrative methodology (Davidsen, 2013) was employed, focusing on the participants' stories (Creswell, 2007:54). Craib (2000:64) explains, "[N]arratives are stories and stories are not simple." In narrative studies it is vital to demonstrate the omnipresence of stories (a core dynamic by means of which people make sense of the world), the researchers' coerced subconscious engagement in matters of narrative, and rigorous reflective thoughts about and through stories (*ibid.*). As such, narratives – broadly speaking – contain elements of phenomenology, but given the scope of this study it was delimited to the respondents' narratives alone. Interviews were pilot-tested for clarity, lack of ambiguity, and focus. Qualitative data was generated through voice recordings, which were then transcribed and analysed. The narrative analyses used in this study will be described in greater depth in Chapter 3. Next, the selection of the target group will receive brief attention.

Ten purposively-selected respondents were asked to participate in the study. The purposive selection criteria were developed according to the selection strategy described by Babbie and Mouton (2001:166). The selection of respondents (a purposively-selected sample of women leaders in the TVET sector) was done with a specific purpose in mind, namely to provide me with stories of their gendered experiences (or the lack thereof) during the course of their careers. Criteria for the selection of respondents include women who are in the top leadership structure of five of the six Western Cape TVET colleges, including (but not necessarily all) principals, vice-principals, campus/senior/portfolio managers, and academic heads. Cultural diversity was taken into account and the age group was 40+ years.

The unit of analysis in this study was the individual women's stories. Most of the respondents and I have longstanding relationships; therefore they were at ease to share their stories with me, which, in turn, improved trustworthiness (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.1 for more detail) of the narratives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:276). However, familiarity could also pose challenges to data credibility and was thus accounted for

as outlined in Section 3.4.6 in Chapter 3. Furthermore, there were circumstances that could affect or restrict methods and interpretations of research data, namely limitations and delimitations, which also needed to be addressed.

## **1.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS**

Shortcomings, conditions or influences that are beyond the control of the researcher, place restrictions on a study (Howie, 2015). This study was limited in that it did not differentiate between the experiences of principals, vice-principals, campus/senior/portfolio managers, and academic heads as the total population of potential respondents was not large enough in order to do this kind of differentiation. Time constraints are usually a crucial factor for leaders and, therefore, only one interview per respondent was conducted.

Delimitations describe boundaries set for the study. Due to the limited nature of the study (as a 50% Master's thesis), as well as time and travelling constraints, only current women leaders at TVET colleges in the Western Cape Province of South Africa were considered as potential respondents in this study. Furthermore, due to the limited nature of this study, curbed distinction was made between race and social class, which could be a further debilitating factor to women in leadership positions in TVET colleges. These limitations and delimitations prompted a discussion of ethical considerations namely informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, the right of respondents to withdraw from the study, and the need for ethical approval next.

## **1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical matters need to be narrated over the entire narrative inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:170). Evans (2002:45, 50, 156, 133) advises researchers to develop advanced reflective skills in acting ethically. Schienke, Tuana, Brown, Davis, Keller, Shortle, Stickler and Baum (2009:319) go one step further and recommend deep reflection on and training in research ethics. Babbie and Mouton (2001:527) maintain that the scientific research community and society are interrelated through the key ethical principle of accountability, which Block (2009:71) defines as “the willingness to care for the well-being of the whole.” Although accountability for the ethics review process remains the responsibility of the Research Ethics Committee, as explained in

the purpose of the Stellenbosch University Research Committee's Standard Operating Procedure (Research Ethics Committee: Humanities, 2012:5), accountability on the researcher's side should be to shun secrecy, issue findings without prerequisites, and be responsible to sponsors (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:527). This narrative study involved gathering information directly from women in leadership positions through interviews. As the researcher was not in any position of authority over the respondents and the topic of the investigation did not potentially expose controversial information, this study did not pose a clear psychological risk (Research Ethics Committee: Humanities 2012:48).

In this study, ethical considerations include aspects such as informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, the right of respondents to withdraw from the study, and the need for ethical approval (Henning *et al.*, 2005:73). Institutional consent to conduct interviews was obtained from the colleges and DHET, after ethical clearance had been obtained from Stellenbosch University (ethical clearance number SU-HSD-000675). Respondents signed an informed consent document prior to the interviews. As I knew all the respondents and conducted interviews with them, I cannot claim anonymity between the researcher and the respondents. However, in my handling and reporting of the data, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured as follows: all interviews took place in private. Furthermore, in the findings, the names of colleges were not revealed and pseudonyms were given to the respondents. Respondents were assured they could take part or withdraw without consequence (voluntary participation) to protect them as respondents (Debebe, 2011:689; Howe & Moses, 1999:25). Also, the signing of the informed consent document eliminated the notion of dishonesty (Lawson, 2001:121). Dishonesty could surface due to the respondents' fear of lack of confidentiality on the researcher's side. Fear of victimisation from college principals, vice-principals or senior managers could also prevent a respondent from being completely honest, especially where there might be a question of intimidation from the college leaders' side that could be revealed by chance in the findings of this study. A confidentiality clause was therefore included in the informed consent document.

Due to my insider status (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.2, Chapter 3, section 3.4 second paragraph, and Chapter 5, section 5.4 first and last paragraph, for a brief description of my position), issues of confidentiality (addressed in the previous paragraph), bias

(see Chapter 3, section 3.4.6), power relations, conflict of interest, and even, maybe, issues of envy, posed a potential risk. Thus, the purposively-selected sample did not include women leaders within the college where I was employed at the time of the study. All the respondents were in a more senior position than myself which eliminated the risk of power relations and conflict of interest. To avoid bias, Babbie and Mouton (2001:278) recommend collecting rich data (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.3), transcribing interviews verbatim, giving the women a “voice” (*ibid.*), and analysing data with rigour, leaving an audit trail as described in Chapter 3 (see section 3.4.4).

Lucas and Lidstone (2000:54) point out that gender roles and behaviour are sensitive areas in conducting research, while Howe and Moses (1999:38) warn against gender bias that has historically plagued social research. This narrative study focuses on the gendered experiences of women leaders, meaning not only men-to-women, but also women-to-women experiences. Still, to avoid over-generalising gender difference in, for instance, leadership styles, a contextual approach pertaining to leadership styles in the college environment was chosen as the best option to avoid contradiction if and when the topic around leadership styles came to the fore. Furthermore, a conceptual framework (see Chapter 2, section 2.5) was constructed within which the respondents’ narratives in this study could be interpreted and understood to avoid gender bias from hampering this study.

Interviews were scheduled in consultation with the respondents, in order not to interrupt the programme of their specific colleges. Four respondents preferred to do the interviews after hours, and the other six scheduled it early in the morning or during working hours (see Addendum E). These interviews were recorded digitally and personally transcribed on my home computer, which is password protected (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005:62). Raw data was electronically backed-up on my computer but not shared or forwarded by email. Only aggregated, analysed and anonymised data was reported in this thesis (see Chapter 4). A chapter outline is provided next.

## **1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

In the following chapter (Chapter 2), a theoretical gendered perspective on women in leadership in public vocational education is explored and a conceptual framework of work-based gendered experiences is proposed. The research design and

methodology strategies are outlined in Chapter 3. The penultimate chapter provides the results and a discussion from the study. Conclusions and possible implications bring this study to a close in Chapter 5.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This study focuses on the gendered experiences of women leaders in TVET colleges. A background and context within which this study took place were provided in the first chapter. The motivation, problem statement, research question and an overview of the research design and methodology were provided. Ethical considerations were discussed. An outline of all chapters of this study was given. The purpose of the following chapter (Chapter 2) is to provide a theoretical gendered perspective on women in leadership in public TVET colleges in the Western Cape.



## **CHAPTER 2: A THEORETICAL GENDERED PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

There is a current under-representation of women in leadership positions internationally and locally (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Van Engen, 2003:569; Blackmore, 2013:139; Wallace & Wallin, 2015:418; Oberholster, 2015:20). Women, striving to become leaders, continue to face gender discrimination and inequalities in the workplace (Dlamini, 2013:130). This study therefore explores the gendered experiences of women in leadership positions in TVET colleges through a narrative approach (as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.2).

This chapter conceptualises theoretical themes arising from the research question. The chapter first deals with gender, gender transformation and gender-stereotypical behaviour. Secondly, theoretical understandings of a gendered perspective on leadership, leadership processes and leadership styles, underpinned by gender diversity, are conceptualised. Thirdly, career pathways are explored. The penultimate section identifies demographics, challenges, and strategies and initiatives that may inhibit (or support) women's progression towards leadership. These key themes and concepts provide a conceptual framework within which the respondents' narratives in this study can be interpreted and understood. Finally, an overview of the studied literature is provided. From the studied literature, it is clear that a gendered perspective on leadership is not easily delineated and scholars differ in their conceptualisation thereof. It may therefore be necessary to take a closer look at what gender itself may mean. Thus, gender as a concept and its related notions will be discussed next.

### **2.2 GENDER RELATED NOTIONS**

#### **2.2.1. Conceptualisation of gender**

While Risman (2004:433) states that gender should be conceptualised as a social structure (behavioural habit or intentionally doing gender), Priola (2007:23) argues that social interactions imply gender (sexual type comprising masculine/feminine identities) and that cultural rules infuse gender. Nazar and Van der Heijden's (2014:69) research

points out that gender is a critical variable in the way people work and progress in their careers, whereas Haque (2011:2-4) highlights two concepts of gender: firstly, a biological determinism or sexual categorisation (focusing on the biological human dissimilarity of being identified as either man or woman) and secondly, socially-constructed gender. The latter conceptualisation consists of four facets:

- characteristics of individuals (gender identity as linked with social roles);
- an aspect of institutions (gender set of norms controlling structures, such as family, school, church);
- an attribute of social structure (pattern of social relations conditioning outcomes of gender actions); and
- a quality of value systems (religions and philosophies, such as gender traits valued and devalued differently).

Concerning gender, Priola (2007:29) defines the woman leader as “a specific gendered *subject position* by the contingently-determined context who is continually judged because of her gender” [my emphasis]. Difficult situations become problematic due to a women leader’s feminine subject position (perceived as soft, weak and emotional), while the male leader’s work challenges are seen as determined by ‘objective’ (*ibid.*) reasons, because the masculine subject position is seen to be powerful and related to logical and competitive dialogue (Priola, 2007:29).

Haque (2011:7) provides another perspective of gender by depriving the notion of gender of its true nature through putting the concept ‘gender’ in an analytical framework. Gender, as analytical framework, helps us to denaturalise men and women, masculinity and femininity; to see them as socially-produced not given by birth thus different through time and place. It helps us to interpret relations of power/dominance and marginalisation, hegemony and subjugation, hierarchy oppression as productive of gender identities, ideologies, and practices. It helps us to look at knowledge and experiences of being women/men as social practice, linked to power (*ibid.*). Risman (2004:446) agrees with Haque (2011) and pleads for a “deconstruction” of the categorisation of a woman as subordinate, as power ranks encourage stereotyping while stereotyping maintains power. Stereotyping and power are mutually reinforcing, as stereotyping itself puts forth control, upholding the status

quo (Fiske, 1993:621). Consequently, gender stereotypes are rooted in gender practice, supporting the idea that leaders should be men (Diaz-Garcia & Welter, 2011:385) to such an extent that, by the time women attain leadership positions, they intrinsically believe that power lies outside themselves (Debebe, 2011:707). To end gender subordination, Risman (2004:447) suggests that scholars identify the mechanisms that create gender and offer alternatives to transform and inform society, although this suggestion falls outside the scope of this study.

From the studied literature, it is evident that gender refers to more than merely the biological difference between men and women. Gender concerns men and women, and, given the context of this study, may be a socially-constructed notion of the masculine or feminine traits when referring to TVET college leaders. Moreover, having dealt with gender as a concept, the need arises to explain gender transformation, diversity management and intersectionality too.

### **2.2.2. Gender transformation, diversity management and intersectionality**

The Merriam-Webster.com online dictionary defines transformation as a marked change in form, nature, or appearance. To conceptualise the South African gender transformation journey, one needs to briefly explore the country's legal history regarding discrimination against women during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Besides Apartheid (discrimination against black people) that was entrenched since 1948, Dlamini (2013:4) states that discrimination against women flourished. Women needed their father's or husband's signatures to buy property or enter into contracts. Women who got married lost their permanent teaching positions, those who fell pregnant had to resign, and women's salaries were inferior to those of men in the same positions. After democracy in 1994, the Employment Equity Act No.55 of 1998 (RSA, 1998c) brought about some racial transformation, but the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (RSA, 2013a) was only passed much later.

Gender transformation in TVET colleges was a process that only started with the passing of the FET Colleges Amendment Act No.3 of 2012 (RSA, 2012) and formalised by the White Paper in 2013 (RSA, 2013b) addressing, among others, gender inequality. TVET colleges now had to design a gender equity plan, renew the plan annually and submit the plan to their respective college councils for approval. Yet, according to Dlamini (2013:6), two decades after democracy in 1994 racial inequality

still receives more focus than gender equality, literature that studied gender is lacking, and gender transformation amongst women is still incorrectly described in terms of numbers only. Gender discrimination should also be eliminated as part of gender transformation (Dlamini, 2013:14) and includes, among others, exploitation, marginalisation, cultural imperialism, powerlessness and violence. According to Gouws (2008:26) South African women are confronted with one of the highest concentrations of gender-based violence globally. Furthermore, injustices differ from one structurally different group to another, for instance parentage, income, gender, religion, geographical positioning, and race (Akala and Divala, 2016:10). Gender discrimination again latches onto the concept, diversity management – recognising individual differences (Gilbert, Stead & Ivancevich, 1999:62). The concept of diversity comprises acceptance and respect. It entails the notion that individuals are unique, and should be recognised for their individual differences. Diversity encompasses race, gender, culture, ethnic group, personality, tenure, organisational function, education, age, cognitive style, and background. Furthermore, the interconnected nature of these social categorisations could also be described as intersectionality (Gilbert, Stead & Ivancevich, 1999:62). Women is therefore not a homogenous category and there are differences of race, age, etc. which impact on how gender is experienced. However, due to the limited nature of this study and the small sample size, intersectionality received curbed attention during the narrative analysis (see Limitation, Chapter 1, section 1.5). Thus, getting the women's stories as told by them seems vital.

Next, having only touched on the concept of gender stereotyping in section 2.2.1 briefly, this concept justifies a more detailed discussion too.

### **2.2.3. Gender stereotyping**

Hamilton, Stroessner and Driscoll (1994, cited in Hoyt, 2010:489) define gender stereotypes as mental shortcuts whereby people assign traits or a distorted view of a person/thing. People's perceptions about women leaders are often informed by stereotypical beliefs about women's abilities to perform well in leadership positions, such as the opinion that women are too emotional to be able to handle high profile leadership positions (Gouws and Kotzé, 2007:165). Women do not defy the gender order by "doing masculinity", but within leadership context, womanhood becomes the "other" gender. Thus, women have to escalate their performance, constantly to be

valued in a male-dominated environment (Diaz-Garcia & Welter, 2011:391). The gendered shaping of educational leadership (White, Bagilhole & Riordan, 2012:293) is entwined with stereotyping (Doubell & Struwig, 2014:532). White and Özkanlı (2010:490) state that men are believed to portray confidence, self-reliance and dominance while ladies are stereotyped to have caring traits. Lumby and Azaola (2014:30,32) found a self-reported mothering leadership style in over 50% of a group of women leaders, but argue that, due to stereotyping, this caring trait (mothering) is unfavourable to leadership success. By portraying the masculine leadership qualities, these women leaders neither fit the stereotype of motherhood, nor do they fit the role of leaders by portraying women nurturing qualities. Thus, these women leaders face stereotypes which mean, whether competent or not, nurturing or not, they will be transgressing one prescription or another, as woman or leader (*ibid.*).

Eagly and Johnson (2006:108) suggest that women may lose power if they portray feminine traits in extremely male-dominated roles. Women who stay in these positions will most likely grow into manifesting the archetypal approach of their male counterparts. To effect change, the stereotypes, or the value assigned to the stereotypes, should mutate (Lumby & Azaola, 2014:31). Grant (2012:111) claims that gender stereotyping often disadvantages women in achieving top positions.

The studied literature suggests that various gender-stereotypical views and expectations are assigned to leaders which may affect the experiences of women leaders in the TVET college sector more than those of their male counterparts. Furthermore, gender stereotyping often depicts women as lacking the very qualities that people commonly associate with effective leadership. This study therefore considers the narratives of selected college women leaders' experiences and which strategies they adopted to deal with gender-related issues in the workplace.

As was explained earlier in this section, gender stereotyping is entwined with the gendered shaping of educational leadership. Thus, since this study aims to explore gendered experiences of women in college leadership positions, the notion of leadership will be addressed next.

## 2.3 A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP

TVET colleges in South Africa are facing a dilemma as many of the current leaders in these colleges are due to retire in the near future (Robertson, 2015:2, 7). In addition, leadership is negatively influenced by the under-representation of women in leading positions as explained earlier. Hence, it is important to consider theoretical understandings and models of leadership, underpinned by gender diversity, into a conceptualisation of leadership as it pertains to this study.

### 2.3.1. A brief overview on leadership

Dalglis (2009:4-5) defines leadership as an action and as the role, style, and effectiveness of the leader him/herself, regardless of how the position was obtained. Amey (2005:701-702) takes a learning approach to understanding leadership and views intellectual stimulation as key to leadership learning. Thus leadership and learning are indispensably related (McCarthy, 2012). Leaders as learners enable others to learn, approach challenges from unique angles, are cognitively intricate thinkers who reflect critically, listen raptly, and know how to learn. Hence, Amey (2005:690, 692) explores what it entails to compose leadership as learning in progress. When learning is seen as an indispensable part of leadership, initiation of a learning environment becomes the key institutional focus (*ibid.*). This type of learning is referred to as negative learning (Reid, 1987:98).

Leadership for Clarke (2009:215) is a unique way of conduct when interacting with followers. Ultimately, leadership concerns the following: skill, people, relations, duties, change and contextual factors, “response ability” (*ibid.*), dialogue, growth and progress, spirit, being human, and interaction. These notions of leadership are eloquently encapsulated in the local community concept of leadership (Suraj-Narayan, 2005:90), Ubuntu, a Nguni proverb meaning humanity to others or “a person is a person through other persons” (Jolley, 2011:1; Eze, 2008:388). Thus, by adopting Ubuntu leadership practices of mutual dependence, the ethic of African humanism, the relationship between leader and follower, is strengthened constantly (Khoza, 2012:1). Furthermore, building rapport and making connections with followers are becoming a key focus of transformative leaders globally (see this chapter, section 2.3.2 below) (Brubaker, 2013:97). Such a conceptualisation of transformative

leadership latches on to another South African concept, Batho Pele, which means “people first” (Khoza, Du Toit & Roos, 2010:58). Hence, in this study, a narrative approach which considers the leaders’ stories as close manifestations to the lived experiences themselves and simultaneously as an expression of the personal interpretation formulated by the cultural and social context of the teller’s life (Gidron, Turniansky, Tuval, Mansur & Barak, 2011:54) is a suitable way to explore women leaders’ gendered experiences in the TVET college sector. But, as context also influences the leadership process, the process of leadership needs to be considered too, which is the focus of the next section.

### **2.3.2. Leadership process and styles**

According to Walker (2013:55), qualities expected from a leader depend on the context and social networks within an organisation. Thus, Pierce and Newstrom (2006:92) conceptualise the leadership process as a connection between context, leader, and follower as factors that influence the outcomes. Hence there is an interactive relationship between leader, follower, and context – producing a specific outcome. (Positive) outcomes could be, amongst others, improved trust and/or a better team spirit. Context explains the circumstances, such as the physical setting, or resources obtainable. A male-dominated environment as context may produce adverse outcomes if the leader is a woman (Pierce & Newstrom, 2006:92), although this is a complex issue with counterarguments and proof that the achievements of women leaders outweigh negativity or discrimination (Lumby, 2015:41). Setting direction and helping people do the right things, require unique approaches and stable patterns of behaviour such as, for instance, contingent, situational, and transformational leadership styles (Eagly *et al.*, 2003:569), which will be described next, keeping in mind that one prevailing style (of the leader) may not be the most suitable/sufficient approach in a complex organisation.

*Contingent leadership* highlights the leader’s conduct and situational traits in terms of his/her reaction when a specific incident or challenge arises and is sometimes referred to as *situational leadership* (Falk, 2003:194). Leaders portraying the situational leadership style can adapt to a changing organisational environment and understand their relationship with followers, including the nature of tasks to be performed (Silverthorne & Wang, 2001:400). *Transformational leadership* transforms institutions



by inspiring staff to rise above the ordinary, benefitting the group through charisma, enthusiasm, cognitive inspiration, and personal attention (Du Plessis, 2009:136-8). Eagly *et al.* (2003: 583) maintain that women outshine men in three facets of the transformational leadership style: the additional effort they inspire their staff to give, the contentment that staff voice about women's leadership, and their success in leading, although Alimo-Metcalfe (2004:165) maintains that high-ranking women leaders transcend the transformational leadership style the more senior their position becomes. Robertson (2015:31) argues that TVET college leaders should adopt a *shared leadership* style, where the leader has a shared role of being a leader and a follower, sharing power, in support of the *distributive leadership* style, where leadership responsibilities and special skills are spread across college leaders (Walker, 2013:55).

Having explored theoretical understandings of leadership now calls for a more contextual approach, underpinned by gender diversity, to leading. Thus, the focus in the next section is on leader traits and approaches with specific reference to the role of sex and gender in the leadership equation.

### **2.3.3. Leadership and gender diversity**

The relationship between gender, gender traits, and effective leadership is much more complex than that which is frequently hypothesised (Baril, Elbert, Mahar-Potter & Reavy, 2006:118). Both Booysen (2001:52) and Pierce and Newstrom (2006:104) compare women leaders' traits (participative, intuitive, empower-inclined and attentive) with those of men (performance and control-driven, very competitive and domineering). On the contrary, several studies have shown that even when women possessed stereotypically masculine traits, leadership is not assured (Debebe, 2011:705; Ducklin & Ozga, 2007:637; Johnson, 2014:847). Literature suggests that there are several debatable perceptions about gender and leadership, one of which is that leadership styles are regarded as gender specific (White & Özkanlı, 2010:13).

Firstly, although it is a controversial stance, Pierce and Newstrom (2006:91) note that some scholars ascribe different leadership style preferences to men and women. A male leadership style focuses on performing leadership roles as a number of social transactions, favouring a *directive* or *autocratic* leadership style, where subordinates receive instructions about what and how to perform tasks (Pande & Ford, 2011:23). In



contrast, Booysen (2001:52) classifies women leadership styles as *transformational* and *interactive* (leaders interact with, listen to and energise followers). Having done a meta-analysis study comparing men/women leadership styles, Eagly *et al.* (2003:569) share Booysen's view regarding women leadership styles being transformational, but state that the women leadership style also portrays an element of the *transactional* leadership style (displaying contingent reward behaviour). Furthermore, Eagly *et al.* (2003:579) maintain that the male leadership style favours the *laissez-faire* approach (rights and power fully given to the worker) or portrays the active and passive management component of the transactional leadership style. Regarding democratic/participative (so-called women leaders' preference) versus autocratic/directive leadership styles (so-called male leaders' preference), followers are more irritated with women (as opposed to men) who focus on autocratic/directive leadership approaches (Eagly *et al.*, 2003:570). Eagly *et al.* (2003:572) argue that leaders concurrently function under the constraints of their gender roles.

Secondly, Pierce and Newstrom (2006:91) question the difference in leadership styles of men and women and argue that the behaviours observed in the previous paragraph might be caused by different sex-based traits, but could also be perceived role requirements, or other task and environmental factors. White and Özkanlı's (2010:3) study show that both women and men prefer the transformational leadership style, while Kent, Blair and Rudd's (2006:60) study about transformational leadership behaviour of German leaders found that men and women lead in the same way. Blackmore (1999:3) warns against a generalisation of women leadership styles (for example, "more caring and sharing"). She believes that this assumption does not consider the complexities of gender politics of educational change which privilege "hard" management discourses of leadership over the "caring" leadership discourses (*ibid.*). Mauthner and Edwards (2010:494) argue that power imbalances influence everyday transactions in institutions, which coerce women to revert to more authoritarian management styles, thus adopting different management styles. Moreover, Eagly and Johnson (2006:107) affirm that leading roles are affected by gender congeniality, shaping sex differences in task style. Men become more task-oriented than women if the leading function is more male-friendly, while women are more task-oriented than the men if the role is women-friendly (*ibid.*).

Some scholars thus provide a clearly demarcated view of gender and leadership, arguing that women and men may lead in different ways (Eagly *et al.* 2003:569), while other scholars like Hoyt (2010:487), Schick (1992:111), and White and Özkanlı (2010:9) maintain that demarcating leadership styles on the basis of gender alone is maybe too simplistic and does not take the multiplicity of contextual variables, such as a women leader on an engineering campus that is male dominated, into account. Also, various circumstances call for unique leader behaviours. One leadership approach simply does not attend to the needs of all their followers, nor does it work for all situations surrounding leaders and their followers (Pierce & Newstrom, 2006:192). Thus, it appears as if over-generalising gender difference in leadership styles may be unwise, but simultaneously assists in clarifying types of gendered expectations that may influence women in top leadership structures of TVET colleges. These women are still under-represented despite legislation (as indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.2) and, although legislation endorses gender equality at work and affirmative action has been taken by members of the governance structures of most colleges, new women appointments in top structure may signify tokenism<sup>3</sup> instead of significant women leadership success (Pande & Ford, 2011:6; White, 2003:50; Pierce & Newstrom, 2006:103; McNae & Vali, 2015:294). Durheim *et al.* (2012:21) refer to tokenism as “a minority within a minority”.

This narrative study focuses on the gendered experiences of women leaders. To avoid over-generalising of gender difference in leadership styles, a contextual approach pertaining to leadership styles in the college environment was chosen as the best option to avoid contradiction if and when the topic around leadership styles came to the fore. However, a distinction between leadership styles may be useful in understanding the respondents’ narratives. Women’s experiences of their career journeys towards leadership are complex, often unforeseen and also different as they

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<sup>3</sup> The Merriam-Webster.com online dictionary defines tokenism as the custom of doing something only as a symbolic effort (with reference to desegregation) to pretend that people are being treated fairly. Tokenism occurs through affirmative action and colleagues often isolate the woman leader/token (Rispe, 2011:129; Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003:327).

progress. As gender imbalances still exist in the studied context, a further overview of career paths of women leaders is warranted.

## **2.4 CAREER PATHWAYS**

### **2.4.1. Chronological phases of career paths towards leadership**

Moorosi (2010:560) and Acker (2012:423) promote a strategically-planned career route. Moorosi (2010:547) found that women experience discrimination at different phases in their career. To examine these inequities, Moorosi used an adapted version of Van Eck, Volman and Vermeulen's (1996:403) "management route model", an analytical framework for gender concerns in educational leadership. This model was created to shed light on various complexities that potential leaders encounter on their way to top positions and identified three phases that educational leaders go through during their career, namely anticipation, acquisition, and performance. During the first phase, potential leaders equip themselves through acquiring qualifications, attending training workshops and partaking in colloquial networks. The acquisition or second phase is typified by potential frontrunners pursuing access into leading positions. Regrettably, this is also the phase categorised by high discrimination (Blackmore, 2013:147; Acker, 2012:413) and sabotaged through bias and unfair stereotyped selection criteria, withholding women from top positions (Moorosi, 2010:549). The third stage (the performance phase) is troubled by under-representation of women. Thus, women, who do achieve a position of leadership, may lack networks and support systems that are often imperative to success in this phase (*ibid.*).

In comparison to Moorosi's interpretative research approach using semi-structured interviews to identify these career phases, Acker (2012:423) presents her own experiences as a president in a Canadian University, through a narrative approach. Similar to Moorosi (2010:547), Acker (2012:423) provides three frames of analysis (learning leadership, surviving organisations, and performing leadership) – all with gendered implications – to interpret her own story. Firstly, Acker (2012:412) explains how she gained management skills and leadership approaches specifically referring to gender, including the feminine inclination to care and share, which she refers to as "women's ways" (*ibid.*).

Secondly, Acker (2012:413) explains surviving organisations as a situation where the women leader finds herself in a structure and organisational culture where masculinity still permeates most of the systems and leadership approaches of the organisation. Thus, she has to endure masculine hierarchies, the marginalisation of women, discrimination, and the preservation of gender segregation as manager/leader in a male-dominated organisational culture. Workloads, domestic and/or family responsibilities, unfamiliar approaches to managerialism, and intensified accountability and surveillance are all factors that may adversely impact on aspiring women leaders (Acker, 2012:413). She uses the notions of gender schemas<sup>4</sup>, glass ceilings, glass cliffs, and firewalls to highlight the difficulties potential women leaders encounter (Acker, 2012:417). McNae and Vali (2015:299) talk about “the sticky floor” (see footnote 4).

Acker’s (2012:423) last phase (performing leadership) expands on the gendered organisation approach providing the metaphor of an actor “doing gender” to survive in the conventional masculinist leadership culture. Appelbaum and Shapiro (1993:28) argue that the organisational context should not be ignored. They ask why men cannot lead like women when it is required by the context. This approach is supported by Suraj-Narayan (2005:93) who expresses the opinion that male leaders are currently attempting to shed the “macho” behaviours many women leaders seem to imitate. Therefore, leading women should reconsider their choice to “act” like their male counterparts and trust their natural instinct (*ibid.*).

The above conceptualisation of gender pathways confirms that the women journey towards leadership may be affected by more challenges than those of men, including personal, institutional, and social dynamics (Moorosi, 2010:547). Suter (2006:95) adds one more aspect and talks about “a complex interplay of factors operating at individual, *interpersonal* [my emphasis], organisational, and societal levels.” Thus, factors affecting the career journey need conceptual clarification too.

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<sup>4</sup> Gender schemas, glass ceilings, glass cliffs, firewalls, and the sticky floor are all terminology which the Merriam-Webster.com online dictionary defines as an unseen obstacle within a chain of command that precludes women or minorities from top leadership positions regardless of their abilities.

#### **2.4.2. Demographic factors affecting career pathways of women**

Hall (1997:314) posits that biography is key to understanding women leaders' performances, which are rooted in childhood, educational and career experiences and which cannot be separated from their gender identities. Furthermore, culture (explained as the intersection between race, gender, class and disability – see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2), as well as organisational demography, play a role in the career progression of women leaders, which is the focus of the rest of this section.

Doubell and Struwig's (2014:534) research framework of factors that influence women's career success identifies demographic factors that may influence career pathways of women. Biographical demographics, such as her age and birth order, the gender of her siblings, ethnicity, her education and her parents' education, as well as her marital status and number and age of her children, are factors that may play a role to ensure professional success of women leaders. Socio-economic factors, profession, and level of hierarchy may also influence women's career success (Doubell & Struwig, 2014:534). Risper (2011:62) concurs and views the number of dependants as another demographic factor that may influence the career pathway of the women leader. Although family obligations do not necessarily hinder career progression, relocation poses a problem to women leaders with children. Moreover, work-life balance becomes a problem if the dependants are under thirteen years of age, or there are more than two siblings (Risper, 2011:130). Dual-income families are also increasing, which make greater demands on the women leaders who need to balance their work and family roles in the absence of family-friendly policies at many institutions (Suraj-Narayan, 2005:86).

Secondly, culture may also play a determining role in women's ability to assume leadership roles. Malibari (2013:3) states that, without covering their faces, women leaders will not be accepted in the northern side of Saudi Arabia, while Maertens's (2013:1) study indicates that parents in India believe that the ideal age of marriage for women is younger than that of men, which might deprive the women of further studies, as parents regard higher education as more important for their sons than for their daughters. Due to globalisation, South Africa is regarded as one of the most cosmopolitan regions in the world accommodating large numbers of immigrants (Sichone, 2008:311). People from these different nationalities and race groups

become active in our economy, thus making the foreign examples given above relevant to this study too. Furthermore, Van Wyk (2012:148,150) argues that the South African culture is plagued by racial discrimination, violence against women, and a patriarchal society, depriving women from leadership positions – sometimes in subtle ways. In addition, pride and individualism are permeating the collectivistic cultural tradition of the black community, which cause competition amongst women for the top leadership positions (*ibid.*). According to Maseko (2013:49), there is a tradition in the South African black culture to nurture the boy child for leadership positions.

A third demographic factor influencing women leaders' role experience and career progression, according to Dlamini (2013:130), is the intersection of race, gender and class. She furthermore states that disability and conflicting perceptions of leadership characteristics amongst different generations play a negative role in obtaining promotion for women. Apart from gender discrimination appearing across colour, disability and class distinctions, Dlamini's (*ibid.*) study affirms that black women leaders in South Africa experience gender prejudice more fiercely than white women leaders. She is supported by Blackmore (2013:149) and McNae and Vali (2015:293) who maintain that ethnicity is still a debilitating factor in career progression. Blackmore (2013:150) maintains that the way gender, race, religion, and class interacts, is not sufficiently highlighted in the mainstream educational leadership literature.

Lastly, research on organisational demography by Ely (1994) indicates that competitiveness and envy amongst women inhibit teamwork in male-dominated workplaces, while Auster (2001:742) maintains that organisational factors leading to stress and burnout, such as imbalanced job specifications and lack of flexible hours, can be seen as demographic aspects affecting career pathways of women. Suraj-Narayan (2005:86) concurs and adds that the absence of family-friendly policies, on-site day-care centres, sick childcare facilities, and support groups for employed parents are demographic factors that may prevent women from progressing on their career pathways. With regard to employees' level of education, Stout-Stewart (2005:308) points out that 113 participants out of 126 women college presidents in the USA who completed the study, hold doctoral degrees. Her findings imply that educational level is a critical factor in the appointment of college presidents, but, due

to various challenges (described below), many women leaders refrain from taking on further studies that may prohibit them from becoming leaders in this context.

Apart from the above demographical influences such as biography, culture, the intersection between race, gender, and class, as well as organisational demography, there are barriers which restrict women leaders from obtaining top positions. Hence, in the following section challenges which may affect the career progression of women in leadership are explored.

#### **2.4.3. Challenges affecting career progression of aspiring women leaders**

Globally, women express frustration at the barriers encountered in the leadership culture of educational institutions (White, 2003:49). All leaders, irrespective of gender, face challenges such as persistent hardship, inadequate education, ineffective health infrastructure, poor access to high-tech communication systems, disharmony in the workplace due to cultural diversity, resistance to change and a history of migration, resulting in blaming others rather than looking forward to achieve leadership goals (White, 2003:54,55). Besides these gender-neutral challenges, Diaz-Garcia and Welter (2011:384) argue that many women who are in leadership positions may be confronted with two conflicting discourses, namely

- a professional career; and
- family roles.

Gerzema and D'Antonio (2013, in Barao, 2014:9) maintain that the two-fold burden, of being a mother and career woman, may be taxing. Vinnicombe and Singh (2003:325) agree and state that having a family could restrain women's career progression and give male managers an advantage. Furthermore, the work/family conflict and domestic duties after work may not be conducive to the women leader's health (Hochschild, 1989, in Ng & Fosh, 2004:45). Suraj-Narayan's (2005:85) study indicates that lack of family-friendly policies, flexi-time, childcare facilities, and unrealistic expectations are linked to leaders with a higher blood pressure than those with low reports of job strain. Women leaders' workload could result in burn-out, or 'worn-out', as Karanika-Murray, Bartholomew, Williams and Cox (2015:63) explain. Moreover, due to prejudice, women may face discrimination, forcing them to develop a higher competence than their male counterparts (Eagly *et al.*, 2003:584). Obtaining this capability, in turn, may



pressurise them to work even harder (Risper, 2011:128). In addition, women leaders face stress trying to lead a balanced life (Ng & Fosh, 2004:45). In the higher education context, women may end up choosing a teaching position (rather than a leadership position) with the possible leeway it may provide to combine work and have children (Hall, 1996:46).

Walker (2013:84) lists the following barriers to women's career progression in the Further Education (FE) sector in the United Kingdom: marketisation and managerialism, sexism, isolation, racism, lack of role models, tokenism (see footnote 3), a culture of long working hours, family and domestic responsibilities, role identity transformation, and lack of self-belief. Nieman and Nieuwenhuizen (2014:44) identify challenges of women entrepreneurial leaders which include limited assistance, negative attitudes towards other cultures and/or ethnic groups, gender unfairness, individual adversities, and lack of financial capital. Lack of funding affects educational leadership too (Robertson, 2015:52), which will be explained later. Moreover, Pande and Ford (2011:13) argue that, with limited leadership opportunities available, many women do not financially invest in their own further studies. Also, Walker (2013:30) highlights that the college portfolio managers in finance, marketing, information technology, quality, student support, and human resources have reached the so-called glass ceiling and battle to obtain promotion as academic heads, campus managers or deputy principals, because they are not TVET college curriculum specialists.

Eagly *et al.* (2003:587) note that such double standards and the glass ceiling itself, often produce resilient and highly-skilled women in the sphere of their leadership approaches, but men tend to undermine such women, whether it is through gatekeeping on appointment committee panels or intense surveillance after being appointed in leadership positions (McNae & Vali, 2015:294). Priola's (2007:21) study shows that the "maintenance of masculine practices is associated with downplaying women's achievements." Moreover, due to limited women leadership positions, women act as gatekeepers themselves, protecting their own positions (McNae & Vali, 2015:294). Women leadership behaviour is not evaluated as equally as those of men and prejudice impacts negatively on promotion; a notion Van Zyl (2009:32) calls "the PHD (pull-him/her-down) syndrome," with those women accomplishing higher positions, the victims of this syndrome. The over-manipulative (man or woman)



transactional leader's compliance-based influence approach is in a way related to this so-called PHD syndrome. Kanungo & Mendonca (1996:73) explain: "[T]he near destruction of the followers' self-esteem for the benefit of the leader makes the transactional influence process highly offensive to the dignity of people; therefore, it cannot be considered to be an ethical social influence process." Walker (2013:83) argues that this "near destruction" (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996:73) of aspiring women leaders' self-belief leads to more barriers: self-doubt about leadership talents and a loss of previous ambitions due to lack of peer support and backing from seniors.

Eagly *et al.* (2003:573) believe that the gap between competent women leaders and the dearth of women leadership in top roles, suggests that behaviour that fosters or impedes promotion should be scrutinised by researchers. Kent and Moss (2006:95) found a growing tendency to accept women as leaders and argue that challenges restricting women appear to decline steadily. This study therefore needs to consider gender transformation initiatives, as well as the development needs and support that women consider they require to effectively advance their careers.

#### **2.4.4. Strategies and Initiatives advancing women's careers**

The clear evidence of under-representation of TVET college women leaders suggests that gender transformation initiatives, developmental requirements and support are needed for their progress to senior positions in the sector. Despite the existence of equal employment opportunity legislation and affirmative action initiatives, women's participation in these positions are still low. Through this legislation, the South African government is instrumental in the gender transformation process within South Africa. It is also well-timed for public TVET college women leaders, as Dlamini (2013:171) states that progress made in the private sector is much slower. Research shows that there are more ways and initiatives to address gender transformation, which is the focus of the rest of this section.

At leadership level, Dlamini (2013:155) identifies five ways to address gender transformation: the roles of government, of the workplace (mentorship, leadership, culture, structure, and policies), of domestic and family support, of society, and the woman's role in her own development. This is in accordance with strategies for gender transformation at educational institutions suggested by Tessens *et al.* (2011). In their search for promotion, Walker (2013:69) identifies similar sources of support to inspire

women on this journey and add professional networks, self-belief, and career-planning to the list of initiatives to advance women's careers. As the first initiative on Dlamini's (2013:155) list, namely the role of government in addressing gender transformation as a strategy to advancing women's careers, was addressed in Chapter 1, section 1.1, the focus here will be on the roles of the workplace, of domestic and family support, society, and the woman's role in her own development towards leadership.

Firstly, Booysen (2001:59) encourages an all-inclusive approach to gender transformation initiatives in the workplace, ultimately achieving an organisational culture valuing diversity. Tessens *et al.* (2011) concur and suggest that working conditions, work pressures and excessive workloads need to be addressed by restructuring roles (irrespective of gender) in accordance with workload. White (2003:55) recommends diversity management programmes as a management tool to assist with gender transformation and to increase participation of senior women in higher education in order to change the organisational culture of the institutions. Tessens *et al.* (2011) see gendering of academic careers (male colleagues receive more support, resources, and recognition) as a concern that may need to be eliminated. Also, developing individual women through mentoring (Doubell & Struwig, 2013:149), adapting the promotion process to eliminate apparent bias (White & Özkanlı, 2010:13) and specifying transparent advancement procedures (Agocs & Burr, 1996) appear to be initiatives which may contribute to the advancement of women's careers.

Secondly, domestic and family support are key strategies in women's career progression, identified by respondents in Tessens *et al.*'s (2011) study. Aspects of these strategies include family-friendly policies, flexi-time, childcare facilities on site, and safety measures to eliminate potential sources of stress like hijacking after late meetings (Suraj-Narayan, 2005:88). Authors such as Hoyt (2010:488), Doubell and Struwig (2013:154), Hacifazlıoğlu (2010:56), and White and Özkanlı (2010:9) stress the importance of sharing domestic and caregiving duties with spouses; for instance, children's lifts to and from school to reduce anxiety around home-related matters at work.

Thirdly, Dlamini's (2013:155) study advises that society should be sensitised towards gender transformation initiatives. Haque (2011:38) argues that gender transformation may work if social transformation (via recognition, justice and redistribution), women participation in the labour force (via equal empowerment, no violence, and discrimina-

tion against women), underpinned by education and raising consciousness levels (via political parties, media, NGOs, government and family support) are encouraged.

Fourthly, women's role in their own development should not be underestimated. Lack of academic qualifications may influence women's career progression. Women should be prepared to invest financially in their own further studies (Pande & Ford, 2011:13). Vinnicombe and Singh (2003:328) suggest the improvement of academic qualifications for the woman leader's own intellectual development. In agreement with White (2003:55), Tessens *et al.* (2011) propose women-only programmes, where the main content focuses on people management, political, personal and operational career development, and executive skills. As stated by Walker (2013:69) and Vinnicombe and Singh (2003:328), high-achieving women also mention self-belief and career-planning as having influenced their careers. Lack of confidence due to education issues of the past or perfectionism traits (regarded as time-consuming), may hold women back. According to Georgopolos (2014), multicultural capacity-building women leadership courses are run to improve aspiring women leaders' self-belief.

Lastly, Tessens *et al.* (2011) argue that women leadership development should include peer/supervisor support and networking opportunities. Scholars such as Ducklin and Ozga (2007:639), Pande and Ford (2011:8), Priola (2007:37), Lumby and Azaola (2014:42), and Grant (2012:112), stress the importance of networking for women leaders so as to link with influential members of organisations and advance their own careers. Women in leadership positions feel strongly about supportive professional networks, valuing these as a counter-measure to the male-dominated leadership cadre (Davidson, 1997:89; Marbley, Wong, Santos-Hatchett, Pratt & Jaddo, 2011:172). At Harvard University, Brown University and the University of Pennsylvania in the USA, all presidents are women<sup>5</sup>, although this is not a true reflection of progress achieved with gender transformation in higher education. These three presidents advise women, as part of career planning, to actively join influential committees, take risks, be self-assured, and make their presence felt in meetings (Moltz, 2011).

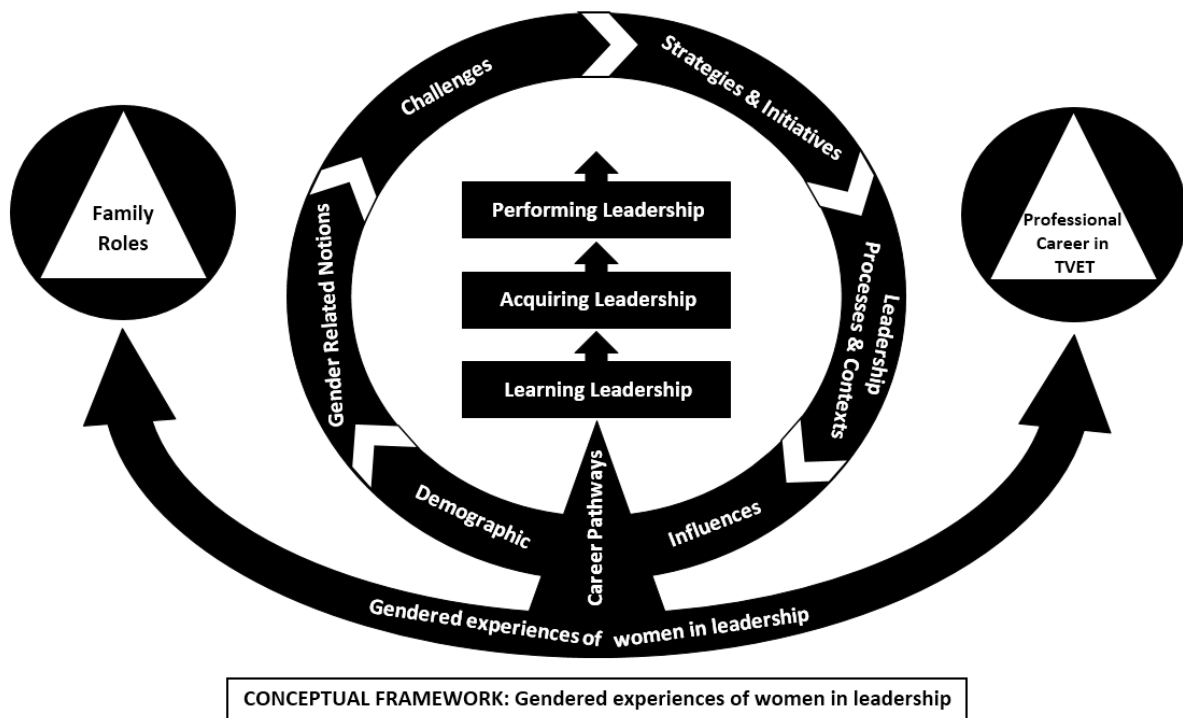
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<sup>5</sup> Currently, at the time of this study (August 2016), Drew Gilpin Faust (Harvard), Christina Paxson (Brown) and Amy Gutman (Pennsylvania) are presidents at these universities.

There are therefore ways and initiatives to address gender transformation which may enhance TVET college women leaders' progress to senior positions in the sector. By defining gender, providing a gendered perspective on leadership, and discussing career pathways with all its challenges and initiatives to overcome these challenges, now makes it possible for me to construct a conceptual framework within which the respondents' narratives in this study may be interpreted and understood.

## **2.5 TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

In a narrative study, it may be suitable to collect and interpret women leaders' stories by means of a heuristic framework of career (Walker, 2013:106), which Rudestam and Newton (1992:6) delineate as minimal theory statements linking abstract concepts to empirical data. Bryman (1988:68) refers to "a set of general signposts", while Leshem and Trafford (2007:96) talk about a theoretical synopsis of the envisioned study and layout within that process. A relationship between building blocks from the overview of relevant literature can be illustrated in such a "concept map" (Maxwell, 1996, cited in Leshem & Trafford, 2007:98), creative scaffolding (Frick, 2010:17) or an "intellectual puzzle" (Mason, 1996, cited in Leshem & Trafford, 2007:98), providing a useful structure for this study within which respondents' gendered experiences during their college careers could be interpreted. The key concepts of gender, a gendered perspective on leadership and career pathways of leaders were explored in this chapter in order to create such a framework. The conceptualisation of women leaders' college experiences has multiple facets, which are pinpointed in Figure 2.1 below.



**Figure 2.1 Framework for interpreting a public TVET college women leader's gendered experiences on her career pathway (Source: Adapted from Maritz, 2013:7)**

According to Figure 2.1, gendered experiences of leading women in public vocational education are intrinsically connected with both a professional career in TVET and family roles, the two being mutually inclusive, and can, secondly, be linked to different phases of their careers. Thus gendered experiences of women leaders may be influenced by the way in which they balance their family roles and their professional careers. Furthermore, these gendered experiences could emerge at any of the three different phases of their career paths, namely learning, acquiring, and performing leadership. Experiences may include demographic influences, gender-related notions such as gender stereotyping, leadership processes and contexts, challenges, and strategies and initiatives advancing their careers. Although the proposed framework above pre-suggests possible outcomes, Walker (2013:107) maintains that a heuristic framework imposes themes and trends within the narratives to assist in producing findings.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

The key concepts underpinning this study relate to understanding women leaders' gendered experiences during their career progression. This chapter dealt with themes and concepts arising from my research question and subsidiary questions.

Firstly, the chapter dealt with the conceptualisation of gender, gender transformation and gender-stereotypical behaviour. Secondly, theoretical understandings of a gendered perspective on leadership, leadership process and leadership styles, underpinned by gender diversity, were conceptualised. The studied literature highlighted that context has an influence on the leadership role, process and styles, and may lead to contradictory perceptions regarding gender diversity. Thirdly, career pathways were explored. Penultimately, demographics, challenges, and strategies and initiatives, that may promote or inhibit progression towards leadership, were identified.

In conclusion, I argued that the key themes and concepts dealt with in this chapter, might provide a conceptual framework within which respondents' narratives could be interpreted and understood. The next chapter will describe the research design and methodology employed in the empirical component of this study, followed by a presentation of the findings from the participants' narrated stories of their careers structured within the proposed conceptual framework.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In preparation for this study, the motivation, context and problem statement pertaining to the under-representation of women at leadership level in the Western Cape TVET colleges sector were given in Chapter 1. Then a literature perspective around themes and concepts arising from the research question were considered in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 begins by positioning the study within the interpretivist research paradigm before detailing the research questions underpinning this study. In the following sections, the methodology underpinning this study is explained. Details of the data collection and interpretative approach that were followed, namely narrative interviews and narrative interpretation, are provided. Strategies ensuring quality of the research are also considered prior to the conclusion of the chapter. Thus, I begin this chapter, by outlining the plan of action for the study.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

While Maree (2007:34) and Creswell (2007:73) refer to methodology as an all-inclusive strategy and tactics of inquiry, Mc Millan (2010:5) argues that it underpins the research design and Henning *et al.* (2005:15) explain methodology as “the practice of coming to know”. Thus, the plan of action for this study comprises a narrative study as design type (Henning *et al.*, 2005:32), of which key characteristics are explained below in section 3.2.2.

The problem investigated in this study is the under-representation of women at leadership level in TVET colleges, particularly in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Against this background the following research question was posed:

*What do the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector?*

The subsidiary questions are:

- What were respondents’ general experiences in their roles as leaders in the TVET college sector in the Western Cape?

- How did gender transformation affect respondents in their career progression (if at all)?
- What strategies did respondents adopt to deal with gender-related issues?

### 3.2.1. Choice of research paradigm and approach

Kuhn (1962, 1977, cited in Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007:129) introduces the term paradigm as a notion comprising “a group of researchers having a common education and an agreement on exemplars of high-quality research or thinking”. Johnson *et al.* (2007:129) call a research paradigm shared viewpoints, ethics and expectations of a group of scholars about the nature and conduct of their studies. In pursuit of meaning, theories and paradigms interlink with each other constantly. Henning *et al.* (2005:25) maintain that a paradigmatic lens positions the study and assists the researcher to stay within the boundaries of a “frame” (*ibid.*) or “research culture” (Johnson *et al.*, 2007:130). Oakley (1999:247) argues that the paradigm selection is key to a well-formulated research question and influences the methodological choice. As this study set out to investigate gendered experiences of women currently in leadership positions in the Western Cape public TVET college sector through a narrative approach, the interpretivist paradigm was chosen as a lens to position the study.

“Participant observation” (Weber, 1930, 1946, 1947, 1949, cited in Platt, 1985:449), or “the tradition of *verstehen*” (Weber, 1930, 1946, 1947, 1949, cited in Platt, 1985:449 and Bryman, 2006:111) marks the interpretivist research tradition pursued in this study. Interpretivism promotes compassionate interpretation and understanding, rigorous observation and the practice of life stories (Platt, 1985:457). Thus the use of a narrative methodology in this study is well positioned within the interpretivist research paradigm.

Tierney (2002:385) encourages interpretivists to extend narrative strategies beyond the use of the passive to the active voice, give respondents a voice and “aim for a more dramatic retelling of events” (*ibid.*). Typical of interpretivism, the focus is on individuals’ relationships and contexts in which people function, to make sense of the respondents’ understanding about the world (Creswell, 2007:21). Researchers know that their own context affects the angle from which they approach the study. Thus, interpretations differ according to “personal, cultural and historical experiences” (Creswell, 2007:21). Interpretations of the outcomes are moulded by personal



encounters and contexts; hence the reference to “interpretive” research (*ibid.*). Anderson (2013:6) views interpretivism as “understandings from an insider perspective”.

At the time of the study there was an evident lack of gender equality and women’s career progression in the South African TVET colleges’ context (see Chapter 1, section 1.2). This study therefore investigates how women in leadership positions within this context experience gender transformation during their career progression (if at all) by means of a narrative approach.

### **3.2.2. Implications of following a narrative methodology**

Given that this study aims to explore the experiences of women leaders in TVET, it locates the study within the interpretative paradigm. However, because women are under-represented in college leadership (DHET, 2015:32), the research also seeks to give a voice to women leaders, which could best be accomplished through their narrative stories.

#### **3.2.2.1 Narrative studies**

Narrative studies stem from the social sciences (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002:329), illustrating individuals’ ways of constructing and making sense of experience (Bruner, 1991:1). Narrative studies take an emic (insiders’/ participants’ voice) approach (Johnson, 2006:242), thus providing a voice to the participants and happen within a particular setting (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002:329, 332). Like Clandinin and Connelly (2000:176), Pavlenko (2002:213-4) poses the question: who owns the story in a narrative study? These authors conclude that the narrative is co-constructive in nature. They therefore distinguish between narrative inquiry (understandings drawn out in an ethnographic way) and narrative study (different perspectives that lead to a narrative construction). My study falls in the latter category – in this case, a study of the women leaders’ perspectives. Clandinin and Connelly (2000:155) refer to narrative studies as rich portrayals of people, with accurately-composed arguments comparing understanding of relations among people, situations and phenomena; and stories of the people situated in place, moment in time, setting, and storyline (*ibid.*). As explained below in section 3.4.6, narrative studies are usually inter-subjective which require an explanation of the position of the researcher as well.

### 3.2.2.2 Position of the researcher

Being a member of one of six Western Cape colleges' management teams, gave me the option to gain an insider perspective (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:273), but also posed threats to validation (see section 3.4 below). Most of the respondents and I have longstanding relationships, thus they were relaxed in my presence and spoke openly about their experiences. For the past 30 years (of which 17 years were in middle and senior management positions), I have been in the vocational college sector and therefore was also subjected to lived gendered experiences (as described by Gidron *et al.*, 2011:54). This study, however, focuses on second-order narratives (other people's experiences, biographies or collective stories that represent the lives of many) as opposed to first-order narratives, where individuals tell stories about themselves and their own experiences (Creswell 2007:119). Furthermore, due to my insider status, bias posed a potential risk (see section 3.4.6 below) and therefore I refrained from using women leaders within the college where I was employed as respondents. In the next section, an explanation of the target population and sampling process is provided.

### 3.2.3. Target population and sampling

Women leaders in senior positions at TVET colleges within the Western Cape province of South Africa formed the target population for this study. The selection of women leaders as my sample was influenced by their extended exposure to senior management positions in the TVET college sector. They had been exposed to gender transformation during their career progression and were required to draw upon gendered experiences to answer questions during individual interviews (as is evident from the data presented in Chapter 4).

According to Henning *et al.* (2005:71) the group of respondents, from whom the data was collected, is referred to as a sample. Purposive sampling was used (Creswell, 2007:125) where respondents must fit criteria (as described in Chapter 1, section 1.4) of "desirable participants" (Henning *et al.*, 2005:71). Thus, through selecting "information-rich" respondents, it became easier to identify matters that were critical to the purpose of the study (Patton, 1990:169, cited in Young & McLeod, 2001:466), namely to provide me with stories of the respondents' gendered experiences (or the lack thereof) during their careers. Ten respondents participated in this study and included

three principals, five deputy-principals (of whom two acted as principals temporarily during the course of this study), one campus manager and one academic head. The primary investigative method I employed was that of unstructured interviewing. This research method is outlined below, referring to data collection and data analysis.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Creswell (2007:119) argues that narratives are created as an aspect of relationships as reflected in social roles such as gender and age. The unit of analysis in this study was the individual respondents' lived experiences (Gidron *et al.*, 2011:54). Creswell (2007:143) maintains that narrative researchers study individuals as the unit of analysis where one or two individuals (easily reached and unique) are traditionally studied, in contrast to phenomenology, where multiple individuals, who have experienced the phenomenon, are traditionally studied (Creswell, 2007:120, 126). As such, narratives – broadly speaking – contain elements of phenomenology, but given the scope of this study it was delimited to ten respondents' narratives alone. Broadly speaking, the structure took on the form of re-storying coded “chunks” of text, explained in more detail below in section 3.3.2. The research method used is another key methodological aspect of this study. Hence, in the following section, narrative interviews are explored.

#### **3.3.1. Narrative interviews**

Creswell (2007:118) identifies multiple phases in collecting data (such as locating the site and/or individual, gaining access and making rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues, and storing data) and illustrates these phases by means of a circle with many entry points. In January 2016, following ethical approval and permission from the interested parties (including the South African DHET and the TVET college principals), I piloted an interview to gain initial experience around soliciting rich data, pursuing clarity, avoiding ambiguity, and maintaining focus as part of my fieldwork (Creswell, 2007:138; Turner, 2010:757). The pilot study was done after completing a literature study on the gendered experiences of women in leadership positions in public vocational education. The respondent was a former deputy principal at one of the TVET colleges in the Western Cape, had been in the sector for more than 30 years and had recently obtained her PhD-degree in Education. The unstructured in-depth pilot interview had a duration of 60 minutes and

was digitally recorded. Although unstructured, I asked the following questions to guide the interview and ensure relevance and clarity:

- 1) Regarding gender transformation: tell me about your experiences, in general, in your role as a leader in the TVET college sector in the Western Cape;
- 2) How did gender transformation affect you in your career progression (if at all)? and
- 3) What strategies did you adopt to deal with gender-related issues?

Every attempt has been made to adhere to interview protocol which included an interview protocol form, a script of what should be said prior to and at the end of the interview, the consent procedures (including permission of voice recording) prior to the start of the interview, time limits, proper listening, no prompts (unless there is a clear coda) and, according to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000), only after the main narration during the questioning phase thoughtful questions (for example, “What happened then?” and neither opinion, attitude or why-questions, nor arguing on contradictions) to ensure optimal response, and scribing back-up notes (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012:2; Turner, 2010:758). In narrative interviewing the influence of the interviewer should be minimal. According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000), the interviewer should avoid the pitfalls of the question-answer schema of interviewing during the main narration phase by curbing interruptions to the minimum and use only non-verbal encouragement to elicit story-telling. The interviewer’s prompts should be minimal to ensure a valid portrayal of the respondent’s perspective. In the concluding talk and once the recording has been stopped, why-questions are allowed, which should be followed up with memory protocol immediately after the interview (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000).

During the actual study, qualitative data was collected from the respondents through individual face-to-face unstructured interviews, with a duration of approximately one to two hours, generated through voice recordings. Although unstructured, a few standard questions (see previous paragraph) and prompts were prepared in advance to guide the interviews and ensure relevance and clarity (Bird, Wiles, Okalik, Kilabuk & Egeland, 2009:19). Creswell (2007:132) explains interviewing as a series of procedural steps, namely purposeful identification of respondents, selection of interview type, careful consideration of interview venue, proper recording procedures, pilot testing, adherence to interview protocol and consent procedures prior to the start of the

interview, regulation of time, attentive listening, and making back-up notes. These requirements were adhered to during my research. In this study, the evidence such as interview voice recordings and typed, coded transcripts are not attached to the thesis document, but are available for independent inspection upon request (see footnote 6 in section 3.4.6 of this chapter), as suggested by Creswell (*ibid.*). Original evidence, such as numbered quotations for the purpose of cross-referencing (see footnote 7 in section 3.4.6 of this chapter), was presented in the written accounts (Mays & Pope, 1995:112). Once recorded, the narrative data was transcribed and analysed.

### **3.3.2. Narrative analysis**

Henning *et al.* (2005:138) identify three phases of narrative analysis, namely

- orientation (structured in segments to be analysed);
- working the data (analyse the presentation of the story, identifying the narrative discourse); and
- composition of the analysed data text (discussion of story structures by depicting how the “style and structure of the narrative itself strengthened, or weakened, the meaning of the text”).

Data analysis needs to consider both the data corpus – in this instance unstructured interviews – and the context in which the study was conducted (Hellstén & Goldstein-Kyaga, 2011:157). In this study, two primary methods of data analysis (open coding and a structured method of narrative analysis) were used to build context and enhance rigour (rigour is discussed below in section 3.4.5) (Bird *et al.*, 2009:20).

Firstly, the general process of analysis consisted of preparing and organising raw data (Creswell, 2007:148), before different viewpoints or angles with which to interpret the data were considered (Maree, 2007:101). Thus, I personally transcribed all ten interview voice recordings verbatim and included nonverbal signals – such as laughs, pauses and interruptions – and careful punctuation, as punctuation and manual transcriptions are both starting points in analysing and interpreting the data corpus (Seidman: 2006:116). I incorporated time-line indications so that I could return to the source and check for accuracy if something was unclear in a transcript (Seidman, 2006:114). Also, a notation system (line numbering), that would designate the original place of each quote or chunk of text, was inserted in the transcripts (Saldana, 2013:28;

Seidman, 2006:126). To pick up an impression of the whole database, the transcripts were read a number of times (Creswell, 2007:150), making preliminary code notes (Saldana, 2013:20) in pencil.

Secondly, data was reduced into themes by means of open coding – a process where transcripts are manually coded by clause and key research question, whereafter concepts were categorised (Bird *et al.*, 2009:20) and attached to “chunks” of text (Miles & Huberman, 1994:57). Then the codes were condensed to represent a final deep reflexive narrative product (Tierney, 2002:388) of a co-constructed nature, shaped by the different contexts (Pavlenko, 2002:214,216). I displayed an example of my research question, three subsidiary questions and the conceptual framework on a stand next to my computer, to keep me focused in coding decisions (Saldana, 2013:21).

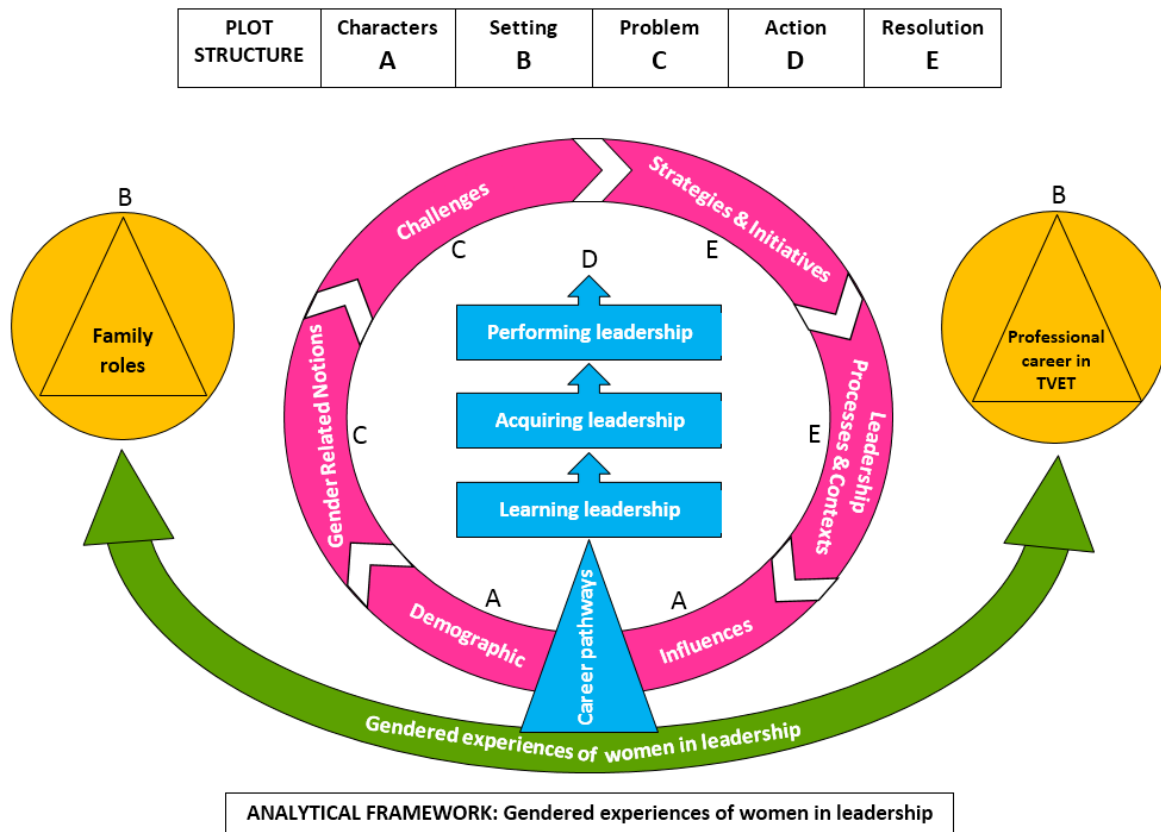
The “codus” operandi, as Saldana (2013:26) puts it, was to employ initial coding in the margins on hard-copy printouts first, incorporating *in vivo* coding – short phrases from the respondents’ own language in the transcripts. Thereafter, descriptive coding – a one word or short phrase summary of the basic topic of the passage of qualitative data – was done in *Microsoft Word* in the form of comments in the right margin, following Miles and Huberman's (1994:87-88) sequential analysis process by highlighting key terms in the text, restating key phrases, creating meaningful “chunks” of texts (Seidman, 2006:117), colour coded into themes – a concept Saldana (2013:175) refers to as “Themeing the Data”. Labels were attached, generalising about the chunks and similar chunks were put together under unique themes or category headings, keeping in mind views of perspectives in the literature (see Chapter 2) – a process Creswell (2007:152) describes as “piori” coding. He describes it as a “prefigured” (*ibid.*) coding scheme which could limit the analysis to the “prefigured” codes and, therefore, urges the researcher to be sensitive to other codes emerging during the analysis – something I adhered to whilst working with the data.

Phillion and Connelly (2004:460) argue that “context is crucial to meaning making”. Thus, thirdly, a structured technique of narrative analysis was used to build context. To ascertain what interpretation of the data is most suitable, the interpretation can be placed in a narrative context so as to reflect on the story “temporally, in interaction and in place” (*ibid.*), which, in turn, is called a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Clandinin and Connelly (2000:54) explain three-dimensional narrative inquiry space

as a metaphor in which researchers “would find themselves, using a set of terms that pointed them backward and forward, inward and outward, and located them in place.” Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002:330) recommend this three-dimensional narrative inquiry space as one of two holistic-content (narrative way of comprehending a respondent’s story) approaches to choose from for the analysis of narratives. This study used what Ollerenshaw and Creswell (*ibid.*) identify as a problem-solution approach, where raw data was also analysed for five elements of plot structure. These elements include characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolutions.

Aside from what was explained in a previous paragraph, such as the transcription of audio-taped interviews, sensing the data through repetitive reading thereof, and applying different types of coding, the methodology also included narrative coding – a method incorporating literary terms as codes to discover the structural properties of respondents’ stories (Saldana, 2013:123). Once narrative coding had been applied to identify plot structure elements through colour coding, it was reconciled with the coded themes in the conceptual framework and illustrated graphically as events, whereafter sequencing of the events was done by means of alphabetical labelling to produce the analytical framework, illustrated below in figure 3.1. Thus, the analytical framework was directly aligned to the conceptual framework in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5).





**Figure 3.1: Analytical framework for interpreting and restorying a public TVET college women leader's gendered experiences on her career pathway within the bounds of a plot structure (Source: Adapted from Maritz, 2013:7)**

Figure 3.1 illustrates how the five elements of plot structure, namely characters (A), setting (B), problem (C), actions (D), and resolutions (E) are aligned with the conceptual framework in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5). Demographic influences mould the personalities of the *characters* (A) in dealing with adverse gendered experiences in their career paths. Moreover, gendered experiences of leading women in vocational education hinge on and could be related to both family roles and a professional career in TVET. Thus, gendered experiences of women leaders could have been influenced by the way in which they balance their family roles and their professional careers and provide the *setting* (B). Along with the research question, the *problem* (C) comprises gender-related notions such as gender stereotyping and gender-related challenges. Penultimately, the *action* (D) arises as a result of gendered experiences that could emerge at any of the three different phases of their career paths, namely learning,



acquiring, and performing leadership. Lastly, strategies and initiatives, and leadership processes and contexts provide *resolutions* (E) to deal with gender-related issues.

Once the transcriptions were interpreted, re-storying of the events was done with the aid of codeweaving where the *in vivo* and descriptive codes, categories and themes on the transcripts were formulated in as few sentences as possible to be used as topic sentences for chunks of respondents' narratives (Saldana, 2013:248) as both approaches (the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space and the problem-solution approach mentioned earlier in section 3.3.2) need to be concluded with re-storying (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002:333-338).

As re-storying involves people, validity becomes particularly problematic, since the story should portray human emotions like anger and motivation too (Maree, 2007:216). A further difficulty encountered when trying to stay in a specific paradigm of thinking as discussed earlier in this chapter (see section 3.2), is the aporia of legitimisation which indicates that "students [should] learn to think in complicated ways about validity [... and] have an awareness of validity as far more than a technical issue solved via correct procedures" (Lather, 2006:51-52). Among others, I used critical reflective thinking, including the use of creative drawing, narrating and reflective conversations, and sustained reflective thinking in a reflective diary, to ensure validity of the quality of the data (Bold, 2012:74). Furthermore, the authenticity and trustworthiness of this interpretivist research were enhanced through formulating journal entries, leaving an audit trail, providing rich and thick descriptions, applying rigour, and avoiding bias (Mayele Ma Mwasi, 2008:21), which are discussed in the following section.

### **3.4 ENSURING QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH**

Creswell (2007:206-208) regards validation as an endeavour to evaluate the correctness of the findings, as skilfully narrated by the researcher and the respondents and recommends at least two of the following validation strategies in any given study, such as building trust with respondents, clarifying researcher bias, counteracting intersubjective disjunctions, using peer review or peer debriefing, doing member checking, including external audits, and focusing on rich thick descriptions of data for transferability. To start with, I discuss validation strategies used in this study next.

Firstly, I am a staff member of one out of six Western Cape college management teams and therefore seen as an insider with an emic approach (Johnson, 2006:242), which facilitated building trust with the respondents in this study. However, such an insider status may lead to a second validation strategy, namely the eschewal of researcher bias. Without a control group, there was a possibility that personal interest in the research topic, and sector colleagues selected as respondents, could raise the threat of insider bias (Van Heugten, 2004:207). Hence, I carried out the research as transparently as possible to prevent insider bias and made use of neutral venues to conduct the interviews (Mouton, 1996:155). I piloted the study, declaring interviewer interest of the subject matter to the respondents up front, and personally transcribed interviews verbatim (Dlamini 2013:57). Avoiding bias is discussed in section 3.4.6.

Thirdly, intersubjective disjunctions could lead to “misunderstandings and judgementalism, or denial of the relevance of material”, which was counteracted through decentring and self-reflection on my own part to gain expanded insight (Van Heugten, 2004:210). A fourth validation strategy was to leave an audit trail including the use of an external auditor (see section 3.4.4 of this chapter) to verify the correctness of the process amongst others (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278) and, lastly, focused on rich thick descriptions of data by using rigour as described in section 3.4.5 below. Many of the afore-mentioned validation strategies form part of aspects that ensure quality of research and are thus incorporated in these aspects below.

### **3.4.1. Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is the degree to which data accurately represent the experiences of the respondents, after analytical changes over time as a result of the researcher’s decisions during analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:112). In this study the concepts of credibility, transferability, confirmability, rigour and avoiding bias have been used to describe various facets of trustworthiness (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277; Creswell, 2007:202; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:112). Next, these concepts are briefly explained.

### **3.4.2. Credibility**

To demonstrate credibility, Eisner (1991:112) advised that the weight or richness of information gathered (see section 3.4.3) should become persuasive through the analytical abilities of the researcher. Moreover, activities to enhance the credibility of

the findings proposed by Creswell (2007: 202-204), which were used in this study, included prolonged engagement and reflexivity. These activities are described next.

#### **3.4.2.1 Prolonged Engagement**

Due to my insider status as described in Chapter 3 (see section 3.2.2.2), I was already orientated to the situation. The mere fact that I had been employed in the TVET college sector for 30 years, reflects my prolonged engagement with the respondents of this study. Spending enough time becoming orientated to the situation, learning the culture and building trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:302) were therefore superfluous as it had already been established, although I spent as much time working with the data, as I did with all the steps involved in conceptualising the study, writing the proposal, establishing access, making contact, selecting participants, and doing the actual interviews (Seidman, 2006:112).

#### **3.4.2.2 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is a type of reflection that does not single out theory, practice or research, but involves all three, and promotes an understanding of the social context through sharing perspectives with others (Dyke, 2009:295). Throughout the study I took on the position of main research tool, reflected on my own viewpoints and experiences that might manipulate the study and incorporated this understanding into the study to promote reflexivity (Burns & Grove, 2003:380). As explained in section 3.3.2, critical reflective thinking was provoked, including the use of creative drawing, narrating and reflective conversations, and sustained reflective thinking in a reflective diary to ensure credibility of the data (Bold, 2012:74). Furthermore, I designed a conceptual framework, displayed my research question, three subsidiary questions and the conceptual framework on a stand next to my computer, to keep me focused on coding decisions. Thereafter, I designed an analytical framework incorporating the five elements of plot structure and aligned the analytical framework to the conceptual framework for sustained reflective thinking while re-storying the respondents' narratives (see section 3.3.2 of this chapter). As interpretivist studies cannot be seen as transferable unless they are credible, it is now possible to explain transferability as another validation strategy, mentioned by Creswell (2007:206-208), to ensure quality of this study.

### 3.4.3. Transferability

Credible findings allow transferability, meaning that the findings have applicability in other contexts too. Strategies for transferability in this study included using thick descriptions of rich data. Various concepts can be classified as richness of data. Firstly, where richness of data manifests itself in polysemy, defined as multiple meaning and interpretation of words (Boje, 2011:16), it was carefully interpreted to ensure correct meaning. For example, where a respondent used the word “get”, I took care to analyse the meaning correctly as either procuring, becoming or understanding. Secondly, richness of data not only manifests itself in the extent of saturation of data (Sullivan, 2012:57), but also through successful impression management – “gestures, shrugs, winks, smiles, frowns, and verbal cues” (Sullivan, 2012:56). In this study, it was secured by rich, full and extensive interviews with ten respondents. Thirdly, richness of data can also be secured through detail – “in depth” data indicating the respondent’s language, own experience, and viewpoint (Kwortnik, 2003:119). “[I]nformation-rich” respondents were permitted to direct the course of discussion extensively (Curry, Nembhard & Bradley, 2009:1445), “dig[ging] to the sometimes confusing heart” (Kwortnik, 2003:117) and providing answers to “complex, sensitive and fuzzy problems” (Kwortnik, 2003:129). By piloting my study and adhering to the above-mentioned ways of soliciting rich data, transferability was demonstrated. However, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:277), only the reader of the study who wishes to apply findings in another context, can really verify transferability. Next, in order to complement the transferability of the study, confirmability also needs to be established.

### 3.4.4. Confirmability

I determined confirmability – the extent to which findings relate with the focus of the inquiry instead of researcher bias – by leaving an audit trail of the data including raw data voice recordings, field notes, verbatim data transcriptions, data reduction and analysis, data reconstruction and synthesis, process notes, material relating to own intentions and natures and instrument-development information (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278). Creswell (2007:209) cites Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Merriam (1988), and Miles and Huberman (1994) who all recommend an external audit to be done by an external consultant, called an auditor.

Someone completely neutral and separate to the study, was used to verify the correctness of the process and the findings and state whether the interpretations and conclusions were backed by the data. Furthermore, the audit trail, mentioned in the first part of the paragraph, intrinsically requires a rigorous strategy, which is discussed next.

### 3.4.5. Rigour

Interpretivist research can be validated by the use of rigour – depth, richness and scope of the data achieved (Creswell, 2007:46) and ensured through “systematic, self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication” (Mays & Pope, 1995:110). Researchers should create an account of method and data which can stand alone and produce a credible, coherent explanation of the research problem. Ample descriptions of the researchers’ assumptions and methods, particularly regarding data analysis should be in their research reports (Mays & Pope, 1995:110). Rigorous research is upheld through reflexivity (Jootun, McGhee & Marland, 2009:42). The researcher should ensure rigour by being critically mindful of the “reciprocal influence of respondents and researcher on the process and outcome” (*ibid.*).

To date, documenting the importance of reflexivity in the research process, have largely been neglected by researchers. Jootun *et al.* (2009:45) suggest a few action points to promote reflexivity, such as diarising all that is influencing the interpretation of data and the relationship to the research topic/respondents, find a critical research supervisor who will question assumptions, and provide a research context analysis.

My interviews were voice recorded, transcribed and typed to gain an understanding of any subtle ways in which I might have led the data collection. I reinterpreted data in areas that were outside of my initial assumptions and explained how the choice of respondents and questions evolved through the construction of a decision trail, acknowledging my affect on the research process. As I interpreted findings derived from the respondents’ views, the processes of analysis formed an explicit part of my research and were articulated clearly (Jootun *et al.*, 2009:45). The elicitation of rich data (see section 3.4.3 in this chapter) also increased the quality of rigour (Creswell, 2007:46). Respondents were relaxed in my presence and spoke openly about their experiences. However, this rapport resembles familiarity and held the danger of interviewer/respondent bias; the interviewer “seeing what [he/she] want[s] to see” (Miles & Huberman, 1994:144) or the respondent “tailoring” his/her response, telling the re-

searcher what he/she thinks or infers the interviewer “wants to hear” or “wants to know” (Norenzayan & Schwarz, 1999:1018). Thus, I explain how bias has been avoided next.

### **3.4.6. Avoiding bias**

Being a member of the population being studied, might pose a threat to the truth value of the data and analysis thereof. Insider researchers should be open to discovering more than what they think they do not know. In this study, the interviews were test-run by conducting a pilot study – assisted by the supervisor (Chenail, 2011:257). Furthermore, bias, due to my insider status, was reduced by refraining from using my own college’s women leaders as respondents and remaining as neutral as possible in facial expressions, body language, tone, manner of dress, and style of language (Collins, Shattell & Thomas, 2005:194).

Problematic interviewee behaviour such as answers indicative of social desirability response bias could spoil the validity of the data (Collins *et al.*, 2005:189). Response bias was reduced by conducting completely unstructured, in-depth interviews, which were properly prepared for, using an interview guide strategy (Bowen, 2005:217), with a specific plan of action regarding pre-interview procedures, novel, ice-breaking questions, and guided interview dialogue in a relaxed and safe manner (Kwortnik, 2003:123). Furthermore, ambiguous questions which could shape and bias the responses were avoided and the recording device was used right from the start to eliminate feelings of uneasiness and to avoid the possibility of respondents clamming up or feeling threatened (Kwortnik, 2003:121).

All respondents were in an equal or more senior leadership position to me, to avoid the possibility of my being perceived as being more influential or as a specialist (Kwortnik, 2003:122). A consent letter was read to respondents prior to conducting the interviews (Bowen, 2005:213). Respondents were told up front that responses would be kept confidential and that there were no correct answers to the questions. Where pretentious answers were detected – answers they thought I wanted to hear – the interviewee was encouraged to elaborate further or to clarify (Collins *et al.*, 2005:190-193). In order to limit bias further, a subjective journal was kept, the emic (insiders’/ participants’ voice) and etic (outsider/ researcher’s voice) voices were separated as much as possible, personal judgement and interpretation were avoided and constant reflection, re-reading and re-analysis were carried out (Mehra, 2001).

Data bias due to the setting (for example, researcher's impression of the respondent's home or work-place) was limited by conducting the interviews at a neutral venue (Mouton, 1996:155). Racial difference could also cause a certain extent of bias, but the content of my questions did not refer to race, which reduced the likelihood of racial bias (Mouton, 1996:150). Also, bias was minimised by piloting the study, declaring interviewer interest in the subject matter to the respondents up front, digitally transcribing<sup>6</sup> recorded in-depth interviews verbatim<sup>7</sup>, and applying rigour (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.5) and transparency (Dlamini 2013:57). Narrative studies are usually inter-subjective. In other words, they occur between separate conscious minds when they agree on a given set of meanings. This study sought to provide an insider's perspective by producing honest and credible inter-subjective interpretations of the data analysed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:273).

### 3.5 CONCLUSION

Research, social research in particular, is not simply following the right procedures or methods. While this chapter has argued that paradigms frame research, are interconnected with the aim of the study and position the research to assist in discerning between proving, understanding, changing or solving practical problems or phenomena, the chapter has also highlighted intricacies with which novice researchers should be familiar to avoid remaining at a technical level with their research. The centrality of the research question in a pragmatic approach, as Bryman (2006:118,125) puts it, is often of more significance than the method and the paradigm. This chapter discussed the positioning of a study in the interpretivist paradigm, with a specific focus on narrative studies, and explained the research design and the methodology used. The next chapter provides the results and a discussion of the study.

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<sup>6</sup> Transcriptions are available on request. Due to the identifiable sensitive nature of some of the information, it was not viable to place the transcriptions in the public domain. Hence they were omitted in the addenda of this study.

<sup>7</sup> Some interviews were conducted in Afrikaans on the basis of the respondents' linguistic preference. All Afrikaans quotes used in this study were translated into English and cross-referenced. Thus the Afrikaans quotes are accessible for independent inspection in Addendum F. Furthermore, I omitted most features of oral speech such as "uhms", "you knows" and repetitive words where they would negatively affect the story-telling or where they would do the respondent injustice in a written version of what was said (Seidman, 2006:121-122).



## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Experiences of women in leadership in TVET colleges, especially gendered experiences, cannot effortlessly be explained by means of a straightforward description or theory. Based on an outline of related literature, Chapter 2 presented a conceptual framework (see section 2.5, figure 2.1), illuminating themes to encapsulate experiences of women in leadership. The data will demonstrate that the experiences of respondents in this study can be linked to these themes, namely the family roles and professional career balance, gender-related notions such as gender stereotyping and challenges, three stages in becoming a leader, leadership processes and contexts, and strategies and initiatives to deal with gendered experiences during their career as women leaders. The analytical framework in Chapter 3 (see section 3.3.2, figure 3.1), illustrates how these themes are reconciled with a structured method of narrative analysis, namely a problem-solution approach, where raw data is also analysed in terms of five elements of plot structure, namely characters, setting, problem, actions and resolutions (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002:330).

This chapter begins with the *characters*; a biography of the respondents without identifying them. Then the *setting* is clarified whereafter the *problem* is delineated. The rest of the chapter focuses on *actions* – experiences of leadership and gender whilst learning, acquiring and performing leadership. Penultimately, strategies and initiatives, and leadership processes and contexts produce the *resolution* – how women leaders deal with different situations. Finally, the narrative re-storying is concluded. The aim of the chapter is to interpret and narrate women leaders' experiences in their career journey within the above-mentioned plot structure by incorporating the elements of the analytical framework (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2, figure 3.1) within the bounds of the re-storied narrative. In the next section, I start by describing the biographies of all ten respondents focusing not only on leadership and gendered experiences, but also demographic influences (see Chapter 2, section 2.5, figure 2.1), as the latter also tends to shape and mould the *characters* of these aspiring women leaders. Due to the limited sample size of my study and a small women leadership pool, racial classification was left out as this could jeopardise respondents' anonymity.



## 4.2 CHARACTERS

I interviewed ten respondents, all selected purposively as was explained in Chapter 1 (see section 1.4). None of the respondents I approached declined my request to interview them. As women, some of the respondents felt they have long been silenced and have felt voiceless in previous studies conducted within the sector. A few found it difficult to feel empowered to tell their stories, but still provided me with rich and thick descriptions of their experiences<sup>8</sup>.

Uurona started as follows: “OK, like I said, I don’t think I have many stories, but I think you must rather probe, if you wish” [lines 2-3]. Eventually, she presented confidential experiences, experiences that I could not disclose below without revealing her identity. And there was no need to probe her. She talked to me for almost an hour.

Oenandi’s interview lasted for two hours. She provided me with private and sometimes heart-rending detail and concluded as follows<sup>9</sup>:

The cry of whoever, don’t take it down. [...] Because if I’m clean in my heart and I’m accepting, then you make your burden also a little bit lighter, because whilst you are angry, you enter that office angry. *Jy’s naar. Jy wil niks doen nie*<sup>10</sup> [You feel horrible. You don’t want to do anything]. It’s you. It’s you now. [...] And do you know what? I feel better now. It was satisfying to share my life story with someone. I haven’t done this for a long time [Oenandi: lines 812-819].

Both these respondents have women principals. In the process of beginning to live the shared stories of the respondents, I became aware that I was constructing a relationship in which both the respondents’ and my own voice were heard. I also realised how important it was for my respondents to feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories. Since I think highly of all ten respondents, I approached them with the utmost respect and engaged with them in a way that encouraged them to tell their stories. Using pseudonyms below, I start by characterising Libby and

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<sup>8</sup> Whenever the respondent stressed a particular syllable or word, I have recorded it in italics.

<sup>9</sup> All utterances have been translated from Afrikaans or transcribed verbatim where the original was in English. Thus the English language errors were not corrected unless the meaning would have been lost in translation.

<sup>10</sup> All utterances which were neither in English, nor removed to Addendum F, have been written in italics followed by the translation.

thereafter, in no particular order, the remaining nine, namely Oenandi, Pamela, Kdriana, Uurona, Ctjana, Frieda, Dnelle, Usalia and Sindy.

#### **4.2.1. Libby**

Libby, a deputy CEO in her forties who taught at “a very progressive school” [lines 17-18] for 15 years prior to joining the TVET sector, was always “sensitive to issues of equality—sexism, racism, in any shape and form [...] and we were highly critical and very knowledgeable about how to deal with those kind of issues” [lines 13-15].

And so, we had women at school and men at school who were encouraged to respect and to truly respect the other person irrespective of religious background, sexual orientation, uhm, your-your gender identification. So for example, if somebody made a remark toward other, somebody who was gay, or who had a different sexual orientation, or somebody who came from a different religious background to yourself, or a sexist remark, it would be dealt with very swiftly. Not necessarily harshly, but swiftly. In a sense that would be an opportunity for educating the other person. And so, that was the nature of my upbringing and my background [lines 20-27].

Libby had industry experience, although she did not elaborate on this aspect of her professional life. Thereafter, she became a staff member in the TVET sector. Wherever she went, whether it was a TVET meeting or conferences, she gathered that “it was very male-dominated when it came to senior positions and seniority” [lines 54-55].

So when I joined the TVET sector, I realised how I almost landed up in a totally different world. A world that I was very unfamiliar with. In terms of the thinking about education, in terms of very often a very strong male-dominated sector [lines 28-30].

To be boxed in, annoyed Libby. She also was not used to men who spoke to her in a “very patronising” [line 45] way.

He didn’t see me as a colleague with a specific role. He saw me first of all as a person coming from a so-called racial group and then, somebody coming as a woman. So it automatically slipped into a talking down approach. That was my first introduction to the world in—of the TVET sector [lines 48-51].

Libby attributed her “very extensive and rapid learning curve” [lines 89-90] to a remarkable CEO. “I was very struck by my own CEO at the time, because, first of all,

he demonstrated the highest respect for me as a person” [lines 83-84]. Secondly, he empowered her by exposing her to many different aspects of the TVET sector.

I think he saw his greatest responsibility to me as *investing* [raised tone of voice] in my life in terms of my knowledge base about the sector, in terms of growing my understanding of the TVET landscape, providing me with as much *information* [raised tone of voice], engaging in the most wonderful conversations and debates and so on and really contributed to my very extensive and rapid learning curve at that point. So that was a very positive thing for me, and you know, we began to talk about our different backgrounds and where we come from. He really stood out—I’d be very honest with you—he stood in sharp contrast to my experiences with some of the other people at the other campuses [lines 87-92].

Libby took pleasure in working with people from all walks of life. Different communities and the township culture were new to her.

Anyway, I really enjoyed my job [...] and began to work with people in—fortunately in our college, we are so privileged that we are able, each and every day of our lives to work with a diverse group of people. You now, for the first time in my life, I really began to get into, uhm communities like [name of campus], like [name of township] and it was really remarkable [lines 155-159].

She was married to a very supportive second husband [line 491], called him “an amazing man [...], an amazing wonderful friend of mine” [lines 507-508] and had grown-up children in their thirties [line 80]. Libby saw herself as part of a team that was here “to educate young people holistically and *not* only about academic knowledge and book knowledge” [line 19]. “It’s been a wonderful journey for me, I must say. The most wonderful experiences” [lines 474-475].

Libby clearly enjoyed her work. A concurrent factor was her very “progressive” [line 372] and “visionary” [line 376] male principal. If it had not been for him, “I don’t think that I would even be in the sector today” [line 143]. She had been given the space and the respect to carve out a path for herself in the organisation and did not seem perturbed about working under a male supervisor. She neither touched on her plans for the future, nor told me whether she had applied for any principal positions hitherto.

#### 4.2.2. Oenandi

Oenandi was a senior academic manager in her fifties. Her father was a Dutch Reformed minister. She grew up as a first-born in the countryside where her father expected her to be like a man [lines 2-4].

My father treated me like a boy from a young age, because he was already having this vision of having a son. I must go to the—do the gardening, wash the cars outside. Cleaning the house with my mother, but my father was demanding that I must go change the tyre with him outside. [...] While I was growing older I would always take a lead in the house to always make sure that I take decisions, because I was the boy in the house, but I was in the body of a girl [laughter] [lines 6-14].

Oenandi obtained an Honour's degree and was a provincial long-distance athlete and captain of the netball team during her tertiary studies [lines 67-68]. "I'd become easily the captain of the club, because I like to talk. I like to argue, so that you understand my side of the story" [lines 63-64]. She enjoyed to lead from a young age, not only on the sports-field, but also when there were boys around. Although her mother was quite strict [line 28], she used to spoil Oenandi and her friends, which gave Oenandi a sense of pride and boosted her self-confidence in her aspiration to become a leader.

I played netball up until, I think, it's six years back that I stopped now to play netball. [...] I always liked to lead. If we've got study groups with the guys, I'll always say, here is the plan. This is how we're going to do it, guys. You'll come to my house, I'll organise that my mum cook for us or do whatever. I was having that privilege that my friends could—of having a study room at home. So it was that quiet place, which you wouldn't get in other families. So I was a little bit privileged [lines 18-24].

She was married to her second husband, had grown-up children in their twenties which her parents had to raise, when she became vice-principal at a multi-racial model C-school<sup>11</sup> during the mid-2000s [lines 128-132]. A few years later, Oenandi was appointed at a TVET college in the Western Cape. Her immediate senior at that stage was a man who did not easily share his insights and, in the beginning, she grappled with all the new terminology [lines 343-347], but due to her resilient nature, Oenandi

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<sup>11</sup> With reference to schools which had formerly been whites-only schools in the suburbs, but which now admitted children of all races.

endured the frustration and, shortly thereafter, she was appointed in a more senior position. “I said to myself, ‘OK Oenandi, take the risk. Nothing to lose. It’s a new challenge. Prove yourself to these people’” [lines 404-405, 421]. Still, she was baffled by the fact that many of the senior staff were irritated day after day. “I didn’t understand what was happening in the college leadership, because I was thinking why [name of women deputy principal] and the others are so frustrated every day” [lines 351-352]. Having been a deputy-principal before, Oenandi applied for a deputy-principal position at her college numerous times, but was never shortlisted, although she had to “train” five deputies who were appointed above her. “Every time I had to impart knowledge to the deputy who was going to be my boss” [lines 436-438].

One of Oenandi’s daughters was a successful business woman, running her own company at a young age. Oenandi wanted to spread her wings too. “My husband knows. He’s willing to relocate. And the kids also know. I’ve told them, ‘guys [...], I’m not going to apply for any college position. I’m-I’m finished with colleges now. I need something else’” [lines 755-757]. Oenandi wanted to impart her knowledge to the younger generation to teach young women the 90/10 principle, coined by Stephen Covey. This principle, states that 10% of life is made up of what happens to you and 90% of life is decided by how you react. “[It] equips you with ways to react to situations and it has changed my life,” she explained [lines 627-633].

I’m starting to impart that principle to other members at church. The ladies. I’m saying to them, ‘If a man or a woman says something negative about you, do not be a sponge. Let the attack roll off like water on glass’ [lines 767-770].

Gender transformation policies made no difference to Oenandi’s career. She was on track for a top leadership position, but when she made a lateral move from a deputy school principal position to colleges, it was as if she had hit the so-called glass ceiling. The top structure of this college has more men than women leaders. In contrast with Oenandi, many of the executive leaders at her college did not last long. Her long-term goal to relocate was maybe not such a bad idea, but it is noteworthy that a women deputy high school principal like Oenandi was still struggling to obtain a senior leadership position at the college almost ten years after her relocation.

### 4.2.3. Pamela

Pamela was a principal in her fifties. Her friends regarded her as someone who was “very conservative” [line 7]. She admitted that she always tried to abide by the rules and described herself as someone with strong values [line 10]. Pamela was an SRC member and obtained a Master’s degree [lines 87-88]. She was extremely proud of her children. “At school, both were also SRC members and I must say, thank you Lord, *ek het regtigwaar twee lekker slim kinders*. [I truly have two nice intelligent children]” [line 85]. She attributed her success as a principal to her hard-working nature.

I have always been a hard worker. I started from a school where I did four years of teaching. I was HoD. So I have been a hard worker and what I also believe, before I was even HoD at the school, I used to have certain roles of being subject advisor, or leading the exams—organisation skills. Skills I had been having from very young. And my friends used to say to me, when—‘Oh, you are very conservative.’ It’s part of me also. I’m a person that’s uhm—when I do something, I want to do it, but certain things for me, is a no-go. You understand? I’m one of those people that will never even abuse sick leave. Because I believe if you are not sick, why take sick leave? So I’m like that. Strong values. My success I will attribute to my hard work [lines 3-10].

Early in her career, while still teaching at “a very good school” [line 20], a high school, she thrived under a male principal and his deputy, so she moved up the ranks quickly.

And we had a good principal. Mr [surname of principal] and a deputy, Mr [surname of deputy]. So I worked very close with both of them, you understand. So from there, I think they gave me freedom to excel. If you are willing, people will—I was allowed under these two males. [...] So I moved quickly. So when we had a new principal, there was a deputy post open. I applied but wasn’t shortlisted [line 21-26].

Male dominance exhausted Pamela [line 35]. When a younger man with no experience was appointed as deputy, she decided to leave [lines 28-29, 35]. Ironically, it was a man who contributed to her new career pathway. He appreciated her zealous work ethic, respected her diligence and head-hunted her. “I taught with him [he moved to a college...] and then he recruited me. I left on the same level, because I couldn’t stand this male dominance and they knew nothing, so I had to move out of this school” [lines 33-35]. She moved to a college and “it was the right decision” [line 40-41].

Mr [surname of recent principal] was the campus manager. [...] But the space that he gave me—I was like a deputy. I was like a second in charge. I was doing everything. Marketing. I was doing recruitments. I was head of a department. I was even teaching. So I was doing things as an all-rounder there. Mr [surname of principal]—I think he gave me an opportunity. And a mentor in a way in the college sector. But, he would always say, ‘*Ag, jong, jy weet mos jy gaan dit gou optel. Jy kan enigiets doen, so jy sal dit gou optel.*’ [Oh well, you know you are going to pick this up quickly. You can do anything, so you will pick it up quickly]’ [lines 41-46].

Another male mentor crossed her career pathway. “A new CEO [...], I can tell you, he gave me space. He really gave me space [...]. I was doing everything and he, in a way, was also my mentor, because he would then expose me to *high-polfaai* [sic – meaning high powered] meetings” [lines 53-61]. Again, she was irritated with the male dominance at these meetings, but relished the exposure.

Mr [surname of CEO] *het vir my regtigwaar geleentheid gegee. Hy het vir my—*[really and truly gave me the opportunity. He gave me—] and we had that relationship and he would—he really exposed me. Sometimes I felt like it was in the deep end. But that deep end prepared me for the CEO role [lines 64-66].

Being a perfectionist, Pamela admitted that her diligence was sometimes a strategy to survive [line 59-66]. Nobody bullied her [line 55], because she was straightforward and always voiced her opinion [line 83-85]. Pamela’s tenacity to break through the so-called glass ceiling paid off dividends. She planned her moves strategically to liberate herself of male oppression and succeeded where a few of her predecessors could not succeed. She did not elaborate on gendered encounters with women though.

#### **4.2.4. Kdriana**

Kdriana, a deputy principal who acted as principal occasionally, had grown-up children in their thirties and a husband who worked harder than most men she knew [lines 355]. Prior to the college mergers (in 2002), the family lived abroad for a year and she stopped teaching for almost a decade to raise her children. She grew up on a farm, had strong religious beliefs and family background, although she admitted that there was a patriarchal setup in her parents’ household [line 36-37]. She regarded the fact that her brother inherited the farm as “perhaps a gender thing” [line 17, addendum F, 1] and enjoyed being the middle child. “I absolutely thrived as this non-entity” [line 19,



addendum F, 2]. She was a perfectionist. “I want to be the master of what I do” [line 391, addendum F, 3]. Kdriana called herself “*hiper-toegewyd* [hyper-dedicated]” [line 49], worked extremely hard and answered all her emails at home – “because those 77 emails in the day, now become tonight’s work” [line 354, addendum F, 4]. Nothing stood in her way and, to surmount a challenge like renovating a campus, she would easily work through an entire holiday [line 207-211]. Kdriana enjoyed multi-tasking. “I wear these three hats” [line 27, addendum F, 5], although she regarded herself as “the capable but unwilling leader” [line 47-48, addendum F, 6]. Yet, Kdriana was one of the first learners to be elected as an SRC member in grade ten already. Because she had been intellectually strong, she was always keen to take up new challenges.

I literally every five years—yes, then I became uninterested. If I reached that ceiling, then I looked for something else, but it was often, uhm, just a lateral shift. Just to experience a new challenge [line 54-56, addendum F, 7].

Kdriana was a firm campus manager who did not hesitate to reprimand staff and students who were idle. She applied strict measures to re-instil discipline and startled the staff with her persistence and determination to restore order and punctuality.

It was a—uhm, the-the first morning the bell rang, I sat in that office and there’s no movement. No student made an effort to go to class. And I stormed out of there and I shouted at them. “Why are you not in your classes?” “No, but the teacher has not unlocked yet [rising tone of voice].” I rushed into the staff room and the same picture, drinking coffee and whatever. “Good morning, please can you immediately go to your classes?” I continued it for fourteen days. Every day. Every day. And the difference after fourteen days was, when I got to that door, they scurried. The staff almost immediately responded and they, they have now bid their morning coffee farewell and saw to it that they were in their classes and the students noticed this [...] witch— ‘Just get her off me. When she *arrived* [raised tone of voice], we rather scrambled to class. It’s a better option.’ And yes, it has paid off [lines 214-224, addendum F, 8].

During her career, Kdriana experienced gender discrimination in its worst form. She had to hide her engagement ring, “because you could not get a permanent appointment if you were engaged” [lines 66-67, addendum F, 9]. Pregnant women were not allowed to keep on teaching. “[A]nd if you fell pregnant, you had to resign” [lines 67, addendum F, 10]. The men staff earned more than the women. “The very same moaning minnie had exactly the same qualifications that I had, and did the same



work. I just had a lot more periods than him. But he earned more than I did” [lines 68-69, addendum F, 11]. She tried to break through the so-called glass ceiling on numerous occasions. “Look, I should tell you, over the years I have applied for nine posts at [name of college]” [lines 36-37, addendum F, 12]. At one stage, in no uncertain terms, she was told that the post had been earmarked for a male.

Then came a post-level three position. This is now a gender story. When I gave it [the application] to the acting head, he was shocked that I had applied for it [the post], because it had been promised to person so-and-so. So I decided it was not worth it to declare a dispute. And the—no, I was not invited for an interview. No, but you know, those three who got the post-level two above me and the one who got the post-level three above me—long before them, I was—the overlooking did not matter to me. I was *annoyed* (elevated tone of voice). But I went back and I did my thing. I was later post-level five above them. Man proposes but God disposes. It has always been my philosophy. And so it has accumulated to the ninth position for which I applied. It was the vice-principal [post]. And it was successful [lines 248-256, addendum F, 13].

Despite nasty gender discrimination where, among others, Kdriana were forced to resign when she fell pregnant, she was resilient enough to return to education after several years at home. This was most probably the reason why she had to apply for more senior positions nine times before she was appointed as a vice-principal. Colleagues encouraged her to apply for a principal’s post but she was reluctant due to her age. “Now I think, I do not want to do this to myself” [line 405, addendum F, 14].

#### **4.2.5. Uurona**

Uurona was one of the first women deputy principals in the country to be appointed during the college mergers [lines 133]. She started lecturing at colleges straight after completing her initial technikon qualification and way before the afore-mentioned mergers. As her mother was a nurse, she grew up in the countryside with her grandparents as her role models. They had a lot of wisdom and were well-read, so she called herself a “spoilt brat” [line 4] and an only “grandparent child” [line 5]. She had good teachers who boosted her “academic strength” [line 10] right from the beginning.

I realised from a young age that I had something that the other children don’t have. And that gave me the extra confidence. So they could dress better than me and have this and that, but I knew, when it comes to the test, I’m gonna beat you. So though I

wasn't outspoken, or didn't brag, it boosted me from inside without speaking [lines 42-47].

As an intelligent junior lecturer, part of her “extra-mural” [line 31] activities was to do the college's books. Thus, she picked up management skills early in her career.

And then, obviously my first boss was also a male—my HoD for business studies [laughter]. And-and I think it is there where my leadership or management skills started to develop. The first thing he told me when I started—he said to me [laughter], ‘There's no sport like at schools at our colleges, or extra-murals.’ So, after college that first day, I must come to him, so that he can give me my extra tasks, in addition to my lecturing tasks. And I thought, ‘What the hell is that gonna be?’ And then, those days, even before Coltech, it was just this manual recording of the resource documents to do the books and all these admin was in there, so the HoDs and the principal and maybe one secretary—I was also responsible for the finances. So he said, ‘Now your job, thrice a week is to come here and do the books’ [lines 27-36].

Three different male principals boosted her career [lines 77-80] and she moved to a post-level five position “within a very short space—because I was always willing to learn and work after hours, I guess that counted in my favour that they—that then, they gave me the post-level three position” [line 68-71]. Unfortunately, “you almost had to wait for somebody to die to obtain a promotion post,” so she applied for and was appointed in the previous principal's post at another college, although she “actually never felt as if I couldn't break through the so-called glass ceiling” [lines 84-86].

Uurona married when she was already on a post-level two (senior lecturer) scale and had two teenager children. When they relocated, her husband took on another job in their new home town [lines 28-29]. Although she acted as principal on a few occasions, “the CEO [position] is not my greatest height. That is just another height, but that's not what I want—no, I know I'm still gonna reach much greater heights” [lines 289-290].

During Uurona's interview I picked up that she had had to deal with much more than what a deputy principal was supposed to handle. Moreover, she had little assistance from the executive managers and the lack of competence of males at her college annoyed her. “Look regarding gender issues, the men were in any case so useless—it was just big talk. If you tell them, put pen to paper, write a report, they can't even write! So, they were just there [lines 121-123].

We become this college house wives. Slaves. We just do. And we just take on more. Because we are so passionate about our work and do it for the love of it. Not for the money. If—if you can't see something had been done, you just do it. People don't do their work. But at the end we suffer, because I can feel my energy is drained. I don't have strength almost. And it's still early in the year [lines 180-184].

Uurona was one of the few respondents that I had not met before. Still, her openness and sometimes even abruptness gave me insight into the lived experiences of a leader who had to endure much hardship at the college, but still succeeded.

#### **4.2.6. Ctjana**

Ctjana was a campus manager, grew up in a poor family with hardly “any discipline and my folks parted when I was ten” [line 5]. She had to look after her younger sister and was sent to a boarding school where she used to “bug the system” [line 11] and was expelled after only two years [line 14]. A male high school teacher “saw something in [her],” made her class captain and that “actually changed my life, because I know I would have been expelled again” [lines 22-28]. She came from a family of teachers [line 33] and “always wanted to be a maths teacher” [lines 38-39]. She was good at sport and obtained provincial colours for two different sports codes [line 28 and 55].

During her first years at the college she reported to a male principal who was a “non-existent rector.” The deputy principal, a male, “used to run the place.” Ctjana saw he “was struggling” and offered her help [lines 100-107]. When he was later appointed as the principal, he encouraged Ctjana to apply for promotions and soon she was in a post-level five (campus manager) position prior to any equity policies [lines 110-123].

In narratives, readers recognise their own story in the stories of others (Sandelowski, 1991:162). Here, Ctjana shared a gendered experience story with me that resonated with one of my own [and I was not the ‘women CEO of another college’ as she explained below]. During a national workshop, a male CEO from another college came to the women's rooms in the middle of the night while under the influence of alcohol. Ctjana did not open her door and found it comical.

So, through my time at the colleges, I was often the only woman amongst all these men. We used to go to workshops. I remember there was one workshop—it was a whole lot of rectors and it was [name of women rector of another college] and I. We were the only two women. I remember the one guy, getting very shot at night and

coming to knock at our door at two o' clock in the morning, telling us that he wanted to come in. I can't remember where he was from, but it was so funny [lines 124-129].

Ctjana had a strong personality and “has never, ever in [her] life been frightened of anyone, because I had to look after myself” [line 195]. Her strong values like honesty and respect were noticeable throughout the interview: “That's one thing I don't do—is lie, I don't tell lies” [line 244]. She mentioned a male deputy CEO who had upset her, because he was disrespectful towards women, “but I'm never disrespectful. So don't be disrespectful to me” [lines 363-370]. For her CEO, Ctjana had the utmost respect.

We've had terrible fights, because sometimes he felt that he could talk to me in certain ways. And I've told him where to get off. I—he screamed at me and said, ‘Come back into my office!’ I said, ‘You can go fly!’ and I walked out and go sit [somewhere] and cry. But we're very fond of each other. I've got a lot of respect for him. I think he has a lot of respect for me. And-and I understand him. We're like brother and sister, because we worked together for xx years very closely, you know [lines 149-154].

She was not taking pleasure in her job any more. Some of her fellow campus managers felt “victimised” [line 267]. “And in 30 years, I never had that. Why is this coming out now? You know, I think it's since we've been over to DHET” [lines 256-266]. Ctjana was sad to see that women campus managers had been afraid of victimisation and as a result phoned her to fight their battles for them. “Break my heart. Absolutely, it breaks my heart” [line 272].

Ctjana married twice and divorced twice. She had three children whom she brought up herself. “I had to stick out for myself” [line 366]. But the woman who sat in front of me, portrayed a unique kind of wisdom, emotional intelligence, kindness - a devoted leader. She had been financial manager, in charge of exams, campus head for many years and her knowledge of the sector was extensive and “that you can't just impart—people ask me questions and I can answer” [lines 143-146]. This respondent was not intimidated by men easily. Yet, her strong personality did not safeguard her against gendered experiences.

#### **4.2.7. Frieda**

Frieda was a principal who grew up in a strict household on a farm. All her brothers and sisters were achievement-driven. She was a middle child, a leader at a very young age and she was always allowed to be part of the adult conversations.

So I've always had this drive to excel. Read through all the library's books when I started at a new school and since standard three, I taught Sunday school at the church. I was one of the teachers at the church. And I was a prefect in standard nine and head girl in matric. And in standard four and five—at school I was the scholar patrol leader. And also the captain of the basket ball team and so on. So for me it's very enjoyable. For me it's great to learn. It's great to discover new things and so on. So, I was inclined, from a young age, to always take the lead. Even with adults sometimes. If I felt they had not succeeded, I just asked, "can't we just do—do it this way?" [smiles] [lines 22-40, addendum F, 15].

Frieda never stood back for men. She had gendered experiences when she was still young, asserted herself and did not allow boys to harass her. I found it interesting that she used a gender stereotypical proverb—"*ek het my man gestaan* [I stood up for myself (like a man)]" [line 16], while telling me about a gendered incident.

I've always had issues with boys. From an early age. I gave them bloody noses when they hassled me. I never kept my mouth shut for them. There was a very funny incident in my sub A year where the boys teased me and chased me and then I ran into the pillar of the bicycle shed and I stayed out of school for two weeks. My nose was just about broken in the process. But anyway, it was very funny. But most of the time I stood my ground against them. My oldest sister did not want to take me to school because she knew I did not keep quiet for boys [lines 12-17, addendum F, 16].

In a typical Afrikaans household, "men were almost regarded as more important than women" [line 41], so Frieda's extended family found it strange that she and her siblings were allowed certain things.

So they could not understand if you—if my mother and father, for example, you know, allowed us to do certain things. To them it was just—it transcended their minds that girls could follow such courses, or can do, or so on. So and we are—since childhood we sat around the table in the evening. It was always our talk time. And they [her parents] have always answered your questions as best as they could. And in the evenings, it was our talk time where we as a family discussed things [lines 42-46, addendum F, 17].

Frieda had strong values out of which respect for *all*, men and women, was high on her list.

[T]he one thing my mother and father taught us from a young age—I mean, it was during the apartheid era—was respect for other people. This we learnt from an early age. It did not matter who talked to you and to whom you were speaking, you respected others for who they were [lines 51-53, addendum F, 18].

She was creative, a strategist and a do-er [line 183]. After having done a brain profile<sup>12</sup> test, she realised that her male equals were not inclined to new ideas. “I find that some men are not open to new ideas and that is why—then I knew exactly why I was always struggling to get buy-in” [lines 181-189, addendum F, 19]. Frieda was highly organised [line 300], always did three people’s work simultaneously [line 341], so much so that her doctor once wanted to book her off for six months due to burn out.

[I] worked through the night. Sometimes I did not sleep for two or three nights. For six years I averaged two hours’ sleep per night. And then I was hit by the Coxsackie virus. It took me about six months to get back my energy level. Now I’m fine. I have lots of energy. But I work hard. I work twelve hours a day. I still put the same amount of energy into my work [lines 349-364, addendum F, 20].

Frieda enjoyed recreational activities, regarded herself as a fairly balanced person and was “quite social” [line 348]. “We often went on holiday, you know. So I did all these things in between” [lines 343-348, addendum F, 21]. Through the years, she picked up a huge amount of knowledge - knowledge that she now wanted to share with people. And the choices she had made, had not been easy, but if she had to, she would do it again.

There’s no regret. I just feel that what I have learnt through my career, I need to share with people. Share the knowledge, share the experience and hopefully you make such an impact that everyone is better off later [lines 373-376, addendum F, 22].

The amount of energy that this principal put into her work was astounding. During her interview at a prettily-decorated home, I met a pragmatic leader who could easily think

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<sup>12</sup> The split-brain theory of neuro-surgeon and Nobel Prize-winner, Robert Sperry, proved that a human being’s physical and mental ability and skill to solve problems, his traits and approach to people and things, are deeply influenced by the inclination to use one part of the brain more than the other. This directly influences their approach to life, work, and every other facet of their lives. Furthermore, the NBI (Neethling Brain Instruments) tool, among others, is used to measure the traits that people share with one another. With the knowledge gained from this measurement, people have the ability to adapt their thinking and reactions to be more adaptive to their environment (Neethling, 1992).

out of the box. And I realised that she had a different personality to those of her equals. Maybe she was stereotyped by her seniors and officials on interviewing panels to such an extent that it almost caused her to fail to break through the so-called glass ceiling.

#### **4.2.8. Dnelle**

Dnelle was a college principal who grew up in a road camp. On her grandparents' farm "I did not take the back seat to the men. On the farm we only had a borehole and we had to use a hand pump. And the oldest three were girls. So you pumped!" [lines 342-344, addendum F, 23]. She was part of a loving family and the middle child of many siblings. Being intelligent, she was a driven person who always wanted to outperform the rest. Her teacher convinced her mother that she should skip her second year in school. "And then, in the first two-three weeks of sub B, they said, no, I am only sitting and am bored and then I was moved into the next class" [lines 5-16, addendum F, 24].

A male teacher instilled a love for accounting in her, but when her dad discovered that she wanted to become an accounting teacher, his answer was that women should not pursue tertiary studies, because they marry and never use their studies to build a career [lines 28-31]. "I blamed my dad a lot" [lines 22-23, addendum F, 25]. She and her mother begged him and eventually he agreed [lines 46-47]. Her mother was a strong woman and the main driving force in her life [lines 70-74]. Dnelle was an SRC member [line 88], took part in three different sports codes and enjoyed debating contests. A male teacher encouraged her to take part in drama festivals [lines 54-65].

In those days male teachers openly generated extra income in the afternoons and then the women had to bear the brunt. She confronted the men, but to no avail.

My second teaching post—there were many male staff. And I can tell you—there's men and-and it is not a complaint, but I have—I would almost say, I bumped heads with them, I did not keep my mouth shut. The reason for that—you know, each of them had an additional income. Driving a bus here, doing this, then they cannot coach sport, or whatever else. We women had to coach the sports teams. Then I seriously reprimanded them about it [lines 156-160, addendum F, 26].

At a stage she fell pregnant and, due to gender discrimination, she was forced to resign from teaching accounting, business mathematics and mathematics. She helped her husband in his business for a while and then she joined the private sector for six years,



where she picked up valuable management skills including financial management skills that enhanced her college career later on.

Those six years have brought me where I am today. Learnt all the management skills. And the application thereof—financial aspects, agricultural management and all that stuff [lines 223-230, addendum F, 27].

Once she had started teaching at colleges, a male principal groomed her for her current position. She respected his work ethics and called him her mentor.

There I progressed to acting principal. For me it was pretty amazing. The principal said he had groomed me for the post. Every holiday I worked with him. No one was there, but then he and I did the recruitment, did the administration. We *worked* [raised tone of voice] during the holidays. And he was just as much of a workhorse as I am. So when I, uhm—he was my mentor. Yes, definitely—he really groomed me [lines 260-266, addendum F, 28].

Her staff characterised her as a conscientious and meticulous person, someone who was always ready for a new challenge [lines 121-123]. She regarded herself as both a man and a woman who was still enjoying her leadership position and wanted to take the college to greater heights.

No, the men also knew, I picked up—I almost wanted to say buildings, if necessary. And they accepted it like that. I see myself as a man and a woman. You know it is true, I have been raised that way. And my staff truly respect me. I have no problems. And I enjoy my leadership position like a fish in the water. It has been like this for a long time. And I still want to be where I am now. I'm not done with what I would still like to achieve at the college [lines 508-512, addendum F, 29].

Although Dnelle's husband was a dynamic man and often complimented her, he expected her to fulfil all the family roles as well. "But with the compliments, he also expected me to prepare the food and do everything in the house" [lines 132-135, addendum F, 30]. She has two children. Both are quite gifted children" [line 135, addendum F, 31]. Dnelle's biography portrays a resilient and ambitious women leader. She was fortunate to become a principal after many years of playing second fiddle.



#### 4.2.9. Usalia

Usalia was a deputy principal who had her own financial business in the private sector, a sector that was also dominated by males and where men and women advisors were treated differently.

There was a difference. You know, it was genuine. You could clearly see the difference. [...] I found it difficult to just engage in discussions with a male initially in the formal workplace [...] because in [our] community, you get the women, separated from the men in social gatherings. The older generations. So you'll find—I have had to actually adapt because our generation kind of was bridging that [lines 10-31].

Usalia grew up as the middle child in a huge family and she came through as the leader, because “us daughters, we knew we'd never inherit from my father” [line 403-404]. One day she came home and asked her father for school fees. He was upset about the fact that she had asked for school fees at such short notice and “at that moment I had made a decision - I will never rely on a man for money” [lines 414-415].

Upon entering the TVET sector, Usalia studied the sector and determined how to support what she was doing. “I did short courses to empower myself—at my own expense, because I didn't wait on anyone” [lines 437-438]. She worked as the only woman in the executive team and “it ma[de] such a big difference to hear their inputs” [line 156-157]. She never stepped away from the fact that she wanted to be a woman in that team. “I never lose sight of the fact that, no, I am a woman and I contribute from a woman's perspective. [...] So, I think I'm making a huge contribution” [lines 158-166].

This respondent's upbringing unknowingly contributed to her success as a women leader. She understood finances and business principles from a young age and worked hard during her career which contributed to her successful career progression.

#### 4.2.10. Sindy

Sindy was the eldest sibling in the family, the eldest grandchild, born to be a leader, “but at school I was very mediocre. Extremely mediocre” [lines 414-415].

[B]ut when I got to technikon, all the subjects was commerce subjects. There we start *mos* [sic – meaning indeed] now from scratch. So I had that kick start and that very good firm kick start gave me an opportunity to excel. So, in my tertiary space, I excelled. I was like the top student in the final year and so on [lines 411-414].

She was never part of the “hip” group, “but that wasn’t my scene. I was always like under cover” [line 417]. Now, Sindy is a deputy principal and as one of the leaders, often has to present her college, whether it is at workshops, TVET meetings or on the stage. “[B]ut it’s my nature that I don’t like necessarily being in the spotlight. It might not appear so, but I don’t actually like that. I prefer being in the background” [lines 419-420]. Industry and retail experience provided Sindy with valuable background knowledge and fast-tracked her career when she applied for a position in the college sector.

I always tell the story when I speak to the students, or whatever, if it wasn’t for that working in the fitting room and measuring bra’s, I probably wouldn’t be here today, because, if it wasn’t for that retail experience, I wouldn’t have gone into that new space of learnerships and skills programmes [lines 421-424].

When Sindy started at the college, she had to establish a whole new department, “because I had the experience, so no-one else in the department was able to do that” [line 28]. But when the department started growing, a male was appointed as the senior and in addition to that, Sindy had to teach him the basics.

[T]hey needed to beef the department up by getting a senior. And a male comes in again. So irrespective, this man came from nowhere – he was a teacher at a school, had no experience in learnerships, or assess—at that time we had done our assessors’ and moderators’ training and I was relatively young. But I think, the influence of this being a male, played a big role. He was able to take the lead. And then he comes in as a post-level two, they appoint him and he takes over the department. So now you have got to teach this man from scratch. Uhm—he had his own business, so—, but the whole assessment and all of that—learnerships, that was new to him. But be it as it may, we had a great working relationship, but I think, again, it just re-enforces the male domination at a senior level [lines 32-39].

Sindy was fortunate to obtain a senior position shortly thereafter. As her male seniors all had the gift of the gab, they were not very productive and Sindy had to do all the work; in the process, obtaining valuable experience.

Mr [name of her manager] got the gift of the gab. He’s not the do-er. So he needs a do-er. And *that* gave me the scope. Not because he wanted to push me, but he gave me the scope to be myself. So I wrote his reports for him. I did his work for him. So again, from a gender perspective, it re-enforces—again, it comes back to—, you do the work and he picks up the report. He didn’t even read it and he would submit,

which is fine! But that at least gave me the scope to evolve, to affirm myself. To grow.

[...] So when he left, I then applied for that position and I got it [lines 67-76].

Sindy's first encounter with a women manager was unpleasant. "She portrayed that 'I'm hard, I'm aggressive'" [line 133]. Whereas "she would melt into pieces" [line 134] when there were men around, Sindy experienced "this *rude, aggressive* woman that needed to assert herself" [line 135-136]. Sindy moved to another college [line 239].

And so from a leadership perspective, that is something that I didn't want to be. I didn't want to play this role. I didn't want to—I didn't want people to know me as this and then I'm actually this. So, I wanted to make sure that in this role, uhm, I was me. I didn't want to lose *me* in the process. As a woman [lines 137-140].

The above narrated description of ten characters' biographies, with an undertone of gendered experiences, portrays a unique kind of respondent. In their biographies, it became evident that some respondents showed a lot of resilience to overcome adversity which will manifest itself in this chapter. Demographic information in terms of race was omitted to prevent identification of respondents due to a limited sample size and small leadership pool in the TVET sector. Having described the *characters*, the first element of the plot structure as explained in Chapter 3 (see 3.3.2), the next step is to provide an overview of the *setting*; the second element of the plot structure. I first explain the state of affairs in the TVET sector in the Western Cape during the past ±15 years and then highlight the respondents' individual circumstances within this setting, using the analytical framework (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2, figure 3.1) as a guide.

### 4.3 SETTING

The aim of this chapter is to interpret and narrate women leaders' experiences on their career journeys within the bounds of a narrative study employing a problem-solution approach with the aid of a plot structure depicted in the analytical framework (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2, figure 3.1). Firstly, I start with the *setting* (second element in the plot structure) of this narrative study, describing the professional career of women in leadership at TVET colleges and, secondly, highlighting the individual circumstances of all ten respondents, focusing on leadership and gendered experiences in both sections.

#### 4.3.1. TVET sector in the Western Cape

In the Western Cape, 38 technical college sites merged into six institutions, though none of the existing sites have closed down. These FET colleges were renamed Boland College, College of Cape Town, False Bay College, Northlink College, South Cape College and West Coast College. The merger of 152 colleges nationally, started in the Western Cape in 1998 and was finalised there on September 1, 2002 (Gaum, 2003). This context is noteworthy because all the respondents joined the then named FET sector prior to these mergers and this study enquires about the respondents' gendered experiences (or the lack thereof) during their career progression, starting from where they entered the sector as junior staff members. As explained in Chapter 1 (see section 1.2, and footnote 2), FET colleges were renamed to 'technical and vocational education and training' (TVET) colleges<sup>13</sup> around 2012. Thus, when respondents used either of these two terms, it was left unchanged. Furthermore, the mandate of FET colleges was to actively cultivate partnerships with new bodies, and commerce and industry and deliver vocational further education and training in order to meaningfully provide for the skills base of the country (Gaum, 2003).

Coming from a business environment, Libby did not know much about the college sector. "I'd done a little bit of exploration, obviously because I was applying [...] but I think my true learning as a staff member came when I actually joined the institution" [lines 3-4]. She saw that gender transformation was inevitable.

I have found myself at an interesting place in 2002, 2001 when I have joined the sector. The sector was in a place of transition, because it was just before the merger. The merger saw a lot of insecurity with colleges merging. That was also a very interesting time for me, because I wasn't sitting at a senior level, I was sitting purely as a portfolio officer. My work involved interfacing with all campuses so I had cross-campus interaction with staff at various levels from lecturing staff to senior staff. I saw a sector that was going to change in terms of its focus on education and training delivery and the profile of students it was targeting. I knew it was gonna have to change in terms of development of women into leadership [Libby: lines 105-113].

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<sup>13</sup> A process that started with the passing of the Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act No.3 of 2012 (RSA, 2012) and formalised by the White Paper in 2013 (RSA, 2013b).

The dearth of women in leadership positions in the college sector also struck Sindy. She had previously been employed in industry and her first experience at college was the abnormal scenario where all the top positions were occupied by veteran males.

And at the time at [name of college], it was very much—that was the norm where you had males in leadership [...]. So in education, you needed to be 50. And that again—it just confirms the perception that you needed to be in education 50 years before you get promotion and then another 50 years, until you get promotion and irrespective of how you perform, the males were always channeled to go into the next layer. And at the time—I remember it was about 50 years ago when I started, I was working in the retail sector [...]. But fortunately I worked my way up, so you go into the tills and management and so on. That was a great experience. When I got into teaching, uhm, learnerships just started. And [name of a senior women colleague] was uhm, instrumental in the research component. So she sort of started uhm, researching SETAs<sup>14</sup>, working with SETAs and so on. And it just so happen, that we were very close and uhm, because of working at the time, I was still working at [name of business] and I was teaching simultaneously. I was like the week-end manager, so with that she then pulled me into the Seta environment. So then we started meeting with a monthly group that used to take place with the big industry and she pulled me in a lot, because at least I had a retail background. And again, around the time, it was just these males. So even though the sector was dominated by the big guys in the industry [...], it was just the big players. So then I come into a different space now and once again, it confirms that the males dominate the space [Sindy: lines 7-26].

In September 2003, the first women principal<sup>15</sup> and five men principals were appointed at these newly merged colleges respectively. They inherited relatively small financial reserves from the previous dispensation, because prior to the mergers, in the late 1990s, the previous male principals depleted their budgets on, amongst other things, new projects, without the necessary facilities for teaching and learning to happen

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<sup>14</sup> The term, SETAs, is an acronym for Sector Education and Training Authorities, vocational skills training organisations in South Africa which are responsible for managing and creating learnerships, internships, unit standard-based skills programmes and apprenticeships within their jurisdiction. There are 21 SETAs covering every industry and occupation in South Africa (RSA, 1998b).

<sup>15</sup> In the Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act No.3 of 2012 (RSA, 2012), the heads of the TVET institutions were called 'principals'. Prior to the mergers of FET colleges in 2002 they were known as 'rectors' and after the mergers the title changed to 'CEO'. Thus, when respondents referred to the head of their college, I left these titles as is.

effectively. The interesting part was that women at senior management level had to manage these projects and/or do the work themselves. Frieda described her experience as follows: “And we did not have classrooms. We had a basement. And my husband and my father had gone and put up partitions for me, so that we could make three classrooms” [lines 255-256, addendum F, 32]. Frieda continued:

We moved the equipment of the whole campus before we could start building, 167 loads. And I carried chairs around, put tables together. I did the layout of the entire site, what must go where. I handled the construction project when—we had an architect who would do that, then they shot him dead in the township. Then I dealt with the building project. I had to do the quantity surveying, I had to figure out how many bricks I should buy, how many rafters, how much corrugated iron, all that I had to work out. I had to order it, I had to deal with the contractors, I had to check that they work correctly and build according to the regulations [Frieda: lines 282-288, addendum F, 33].

Kdriana also renovated a very old campus building during her holidays, saw it as an “adventure” [line181] and did most of it on her own.

The campus there was in a dreadful state. I truly exerted myself there. One building was fourteen years old and its windows were never cleaned, because it was high. Oh, I can show you photos, I can show you graphs. Afterwards I thought it was a wonderful adventure, but it was very hard work. I fetched the college’s laundry myself and I drove away the garbage myself. Personally. The former principal moved from the old site to the new site and came and stored those things under lock and key. So I fetched the college’s truck and I loaded. And loaded. There were two male workers and I heard the one saying to the other, this madam wants to kill us with work. Then I went and bought them the ultimate. I bought Kentucky en Coke and that got them going again for a long time [...]. In any case, the campus had been cleaned, the communication was addressed, I did—the classrooms did not have notice-boards. There were no waste bins. Just a box of which the lids were ripped off. So it already looked like litter, so now everything is thrown next to the box. The people did not clean. The uhm—so they went home for the April holiday [and I] leased industrial scrubbing machines. Those floor tiles that had never been scrubbed, were cleaned properly, the classrooms were all repainted. The notice-boards installed. Waste bins were bought, white boards were installed, all—in that week I had the corridors emptied and the junk removed by a truck. You will not believe the difference it has

made to the staff's psyche when they came back [Kdriana: lines 178-211, addendum F, 34].

For seventeen years Dnelle worked closely with a male principal, whom she looked upon as her mentor. She regarded her experience as part of his building team at the college as a learning curve on her way to acquiring leadership.

Can I tell you, that building in [name of city]—we constructed that building. But uhm, the—I had all the logistics—uhm [name of principal] attended to the construction work. I had to order all the equipment, the chairs, the tables, the supplies—you know, for everything, I had to do deal with the suppliers. And for me it was a learning experience [Dnelle: lines 326-330, addendum F, 35].

Apart from building projects, the women were also utilised as fundraisers to equip the new buildings. Without any extra remuneration, Dnelle sacrificed many weekends.

But you know, what we have done—without demanding compensation. That is why I—I cannot tolerate requests from everyone who wants to be remunerated for everything. [...] When we built the new campus at the college—when it was done, it was an empty shell. Then we had to—we managed to procure the equipment, but the hall and the cafeteria was a shell. And there were no floodlights, because we had—sport for us was quite important, so I coached a lot. And we did not have these floodlights, spotlights. Then [name of principal]'s wife and two of the office staff and I—we then formed a team. Every weekend we did catering. For 280, 250 people. We did all the weddings. We did seminars and everything. And the preparation—Thursdays we bought the stuff and Friday afternoons we already started preparing. Then Saturday morning we, you know, completed everything. I have worked myself to a standstill for that. But it was very enjoyable. It was very enjoyable to be able to contribute, because it had been almost every weekend. We collected a lot of money. We—all those things that we wanted to do, we equipped fully [Dnelle: lines 345-357, addendum F, 36].

Centralisation around 2005 was also a new concept which frustrated staff. The top management structure of each college moved into separate offices which were situated on one of their campuses, or consisted of a separate building, which was rented and called the 'central office'. Most of the college management teams later on built their own central offices. Ctjana explained her frustration:



But I cannot, I cannot work with the central office anymore. If I had to run this campus all on my own, I'd be fine. And I'm happy. I ran a campus where I did my own books, I employed my own staff, I had—I met with the college council, I did everything. And it wasn't a problem. Now I've got all these youngsters telling—trying to tell me what to do. And they talk [swearword], excuse my language. They haven't got a clue, they say things that are so illogical. And when you try and explain to them, 'This is illogical, this cannot work,' they don't see it. And they think, you're just being difficult. So I'm really, uhm, I'm seen as the trouble maker. The other campus heads are very upset that I'm going, because I'm the only one who's prepared to open my mouth. I've spoken to them all, because they're all younger than me. I've actually had a meeting with them and said, 'Then what's gonna happen when I leave? You guys have to talk up. You have to say what you're unhappy with. You really do.' And they said, 'No, we're too frightened.' And that really upset me. And even two of my, both—I've got three post-level threes here. I had a good talk to them one day. And [name of post-level three staff member], an exceptionally strong lady says, 'Ctjana, no, people don't want to say, because they're going to be victimised.' And that really breaks my heart, because I have never, ever in my life been frightened of anyone. Because I had to look after myself. [Ctjana: lines 181-196].

The above narrated *setting*, the second element of the plot structure, simultaneously highlighted excitement in anticipation of transformation in the sector, but also displayed a sector where women, over and above their normal management functions, worked extremely hard physically, in an environment where males occupied most of the top management positions.

Moreover, the conceptual framework as explained in Chapter 2, section 2.5, figure 2.1, indicates that respondents' individual circumstances could have influenced their experiences during their career progression. Hence, in the second section of the *setting* these individual circumstances will now be illuminated.

#### **4.3.2. Respondents' individual circumstances**

The theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5) yields a conceptual framework which points out that the gendered experiences of women leaders are intricately balanced in their professional careers and family roles (which also became evident in the respondents' interviews).



Libby explained that a supportive husband was part of the answer to a successful career, although her promotion to a senior position came at the expense of her family and her health. She described how she managed to strike a balance between family responsibilities and a professional career.

You know, that has always been a challenge and I think people has [sic] always expressed concern to me about that. I'm gonna be very frank with you. I don't think that I've always gotten that balance right. I've got xx children. People often ask me, 'How do you do this? You raise these children. You've got an incredible relationship with your kids. You make time for them.' I think, sometimes, it has cost me a lot personally. I haven't always been able to do the things when they were growing up and I was chasing this career, because remember, I came from the private sector. I moved into a new job, my children were young. I think almost now, I'm—my children are all grown up. But you know what, I finally feel now, I'm at a place where I can give some time back to myself, so, for example, picking up my running and walking a year ago and carving out a little space for myself now. And I must say that I—people cautioned me a lot, because I can tend to—I got very ill last year, I want to tell you. I didn't have to be hospitalised, but in the last two weeks of the year, I physically, I was—I had nothing left and it is never a good place to be [Libby: lines 468-479].

Libby joined the TVET sector long before the mergers. She was overwhelmed by the male domination to such an extent, that she considered quitting if it had not been for her husband's encouragement and assistance.

I remember coming home one evening and saying to my husband, 'Oh my word, what on earth—where, what planet have I landed on? Where am I? I don't know what—I don't know these people—I just can't believe the mind-set here, it is like—jô, you know?' I remember also saying to him, 'You know, I'm not sure that this is the home for me. I don't think that this is the place for me. I love education, but I don't think I'm going to make it here in this'—and he took one look at me and I think it was *that* turning point—he said to me, 'Let me tell you something. This is a sector in change. I'm telling you, if you stay, you will grow through that change. And it's something you can contribute to.' And I think it was because of that and our daily conversations and the information. When I looked at what this document—the documents he was giving me, I grasped it. I think it was a month later, I said to him, 'I know exactly what you were talking about.' And I realise that *that* is going to even be more pressure.

Because you're going to be up against people who are going to say, 'Leave us. This is the status quo, don't kind of upset our apple cart here' [Libby: lines 144-155].

Despite her almost utopian setup at home, the demands of a senior position was draining Libby mentally and physically.

I go home to an absolute haven of a home. My husband is an amazing man, he is an amazing wonderful friend of mine. And I just love this man to absolute bits. Uhm, he is a very strong person, we're both very strong people. You know, if my marriage wasn't the way it is, I don't know how I would have coped. And I think the saving grace is, I've got such a fantastic—the kids is so great man. We are a big, communicative, generous family, you know. So when I go home, I really, I go home to a serious haven. I don't go home to any hassles. It helps as well to have that balance. You can't do this job if you don't have a centeredness in your mind. I am telling you know, you couldn't. This job will kill you. This job will take you and drown you. Cause it's too demanding. Uhm, stress levels, you got to manage. You've got to manage your time, you've got to manage your health. Through last year, I was down with flues and the systems. It's laryngitis, then it's bronchitis and it's repetitive. So you're on antibiotics and you don't go off. When you're supposed to go off, you're still on it, until you reach a point by the end of the year where you're just so tired, you're just not functioning. And you know, I *do* want to say, that we're all guilty of that [Libby: lines 485-499].

Pamela admitted that she neglected her family, husband and children, but had this drive in her to succeed [line 177-178]. "And I must also say the successes also come at the expense of my family" [line 171]. She stayed abroad for a while to further her postgraduate studies. "So, in a way, it's hard work and sacrifices. I mean, how can you leave [two toddlers] with a dad and a nanny for so many months?" [lines 15-17].

Frieda, Dnelle and Uurona's husbands were prepared to sell their houses and their businesses and relocate to support their wives. Frieda and her husband did it twice [lines 366-367]. Uurona admitted that her professional career engulfed her family roles, but fortunately, she had a lot of support structures and her household was taken care of while she was working almost around the clock. Her husband had to take on another job when they relocated, but he was always very supportive [lines 128-129].

My husband really just had to do almost everything at home, but I have a full-time person at my house that worked there for nine years [...], so I know my household

was in good hands. And the children is taken care of. And my husband is there, so—I had a lot of family. My whole family supported me. So my mother-in-law will come from [name of hometown] and she'll come for three months and—no, my family [...], they knew, I am in another place, they must just support [Uurona: lines 215-221].

For Pamela, it was just as hard to balance family roles and her professional career. “I’m one of those—if I have work, I will stay until eight or nine, whereas I have young kids. [...] I missed my son’s graduation at pre-school [...]. In a way, it’s hard work and sacrifices” [lines 11-16]. She gave her husband all the credit for supporting her. They had to buy a new house closer to her work, “And I must say my successes also came at the expense of my family” [lines 171-176].

He’s more the family man. But, the thing is, with him sometimes, he gets annoyed, *dan sê hy vir my* [then he says to me], ‘This is not [name of her college]’ [laughter]. *Hy sê* [He says], ‘Stop!’ But he still supported me. Yes, he really supported me all the way [Pamela: lines 191-195].

Frieda was married to a supportive husband [lines 244-245]. He assisted her in many ways, one of which was when he assisted her to write and win an appeal against the municipality when they wanted to close a road next to the college [lines 269-271].

Sometimes my husband even helps me. No, I cannot tell you everything he has done already [...]. He-he and my father had gone and put up partitions for me, so that we could make three classrooms. He helped to put up things for the dances [Frieda: lines 252-256, addendum F, 37].

Like Libby, Ctjana, Frieda and Uurona, Pamela admitted that all the hard work affected her physically.

Yes. Hundred times. *Hundred times* [voice raised a lot]!! I’ve been in hospital overnight. *Aag, as jy ‘n week in die hospitaal is op ‘n drip* [Oh, if you are in hospital on a drip for a week] [...], my stress gets to me in another way. It attacks me physically. That’s the thing. Mine is in a different way [...]. Then I’m in hospital for five days. That’s how the stress affects me. So I changed my diet completely. That helped a bit. I’m naughty now and then, but I changed my diet completely. Completely changed it [Pamela: lines 267-274, addendum F, 38].

Ctjana had to juggle her family roles and professional career since the day she got married and “it was a hell of a job” [lines 104-105]. She had to resign when she fell

pregnant. “And I had xx children and I was working night class. My husband was someone who’d spent money, so I just had to keep working. So I taught three nights a week” [lines 102-104]. When the post-level two came around, she was asked to apply, but she was also going through a divorce. She applied and she got the post. “I’ve been married twice and divorced twice. I’ve brought the children up on my own. I had to stick it out for myself [lines 365-366].

I was lucky in a way, that my mom in law lived with me. Lucky in one way, but in another way, I think indirectly she caused the divorce. But not directly. Lovely old lady. She looked after the kids. I really worked hard. I had to rush home and make supper. Get into the car, come to college at night. I’m really, I am forgetful. I forgot my kids a few times [laughter]. Yes, it was exceptionally hard. It’s always the women that has to attend to family problems. It just upsets me. If there’s a problem with the child, the woman stay at home. Not the man. But there’s nothing you can do about it. If any extra work had to be done to make more money, it was me who had to go and do the extra work. Yes, I worked flipping hard. It was tough and then I got divorced and that was even tougher. Because I had xx children [Ctjana: lines 384-394].

Although Ctjana was fit, she claimed that all the hard work was beginning to take its toll lately. Illness had struck her in a strange way.

I suffered from panic attacks. No-one ever realised. I started feeling funny. I thought I had cancer. And they tested me, and said, ‘Ctjana, you had panic attacks.’ I said, ‘You’re joking.’ I couldn’t breathe. My arms were getting sore. I got heart palpitations. So, uhm, now I know what it is. It just happens out of the blue. But I’ve come across at least five or six staff members who also—and then I talked to them. I thought I was going mad. But now I know what it is. Apparently, it’s something in your brain. It’s a chemical in your brain. Funny, hey? [Ctjana: lines 395-401].

Oenandi was even more frank about this equilibrium between family roles and her professional career. She worked so hard that she did not realise she was losing her husband. When they got divorced, she resigned, left her kids with her parents and relocated on her own. But it was in Oenandi’s nature to give her all to the college. “Weekends, when we go somewhere, I will have work with me. So I’ll be busy with work, trying to formulate how I’m going to deal with something. Because I was always wanting to be on top of my game” [lines 489-491]. Thanks to a very supportive second husband, she now felt more in control, but still believed that the load at college was

too much. “And I said to myself, I’m no longer going to apply for any college position. I’m-I’m finished with colleges now. I need something else” [lines 756-757].

Usalia had her daughters when she was still relatively young and she trained them from a young age to help run the household. Thus, although she worked at the college until late afternoons, she could always expect that “food [was] cooked for the whole family” [lines 216-217] once she got home. “They were ironing, looking after themselves and by the time they reached sixteen, seventeen, they were shopping for the household, running the household” [lines 217-219]. Usalia was one of a few who did not complain about sacrificing family life for her career. She married early, had her children, worked ever since and studied all the time. At this stage, she is still furthering her studies. Due to her financial background, “It was easy for me to understand management. [...] It was [also] coming from my childhood [...] and I really wake up every day to add value” [lines 440-443].

Kdriana invested in her family by giving up her career for many years to raise her children. That was a huge financial burden to the family. She believed that she was reaping the benefits lately. “I want to believe that it was perhaps that investment” [lines 80-81, addendum F, 39].

When I fell pregnant, I did not teach for seven years. Because I wanted to raise children. It was also part of that era’s expectations. But that’s what I wanted to do. So this was not a-uhm, an issue. I do not know if I was brainwashed and that I therefore think that I wanted to do it. It was just—I do not know, but I did. I did and if I can do it again, I will—we have made great financial sacrifices. We sold our house and rented a house to make that payment smaller. My husband worked and studied. So yes, these were not happy times financially, but otherwise it was absolutely blessed. And I will never change [it]. My one child is xx years of age, my other child is xx years of age and they love to come home, or vice versa. We go on holiday together and we visit one another. I would like to believe that it was those investments. I do not know [Kdriana: lines 73-81, addendum F, 40].

Sindy told me about the difference between women with children and those without children. It was almost like a competition—a battle between those with and without kids. Some of them worked from eight until two o’clock; the others were career-driven

and had to put in lots of hours and lots of effort, irrespective of how many children they had to raise as well.

So you have this other battle between, amongst the women now. From a gender perspective you have this other competition or other challenge. It's that women also compare themselves, so you get the career orientated women that will put in lots of hours and lots of effort too, because they want to further themselves. But that's their focus area. And then on the other side, you've got the women that really do work hard and has potential, the potential probably. But their scapegoat almost is that, 'I want to be the mother.' You know? 'I'm a mother first, before I am a career woman.' And so within the work-place, you have that type of battle as well that takes place. And that is what we saw there. So, some of these women, felt that they wanted—, so you're not comparing apples with apples, but within that space, you do have that type of competition. So, uhm—and it's finding that balance [Sindy: lines 179-189].

The respondents' individual circumstances were beginning to reveal that something was amiss. They all worked extremely hard—at home and at work. Work from the office was taken home. A normal eight to five working day did not exist anymore. Almost all the respondents' health was compromised adversely. Having exposed a possible conundrum, the next section presents a formulation of what could be the *problem* (the latter also being the third element of the plot structure).

#### 4.4 PROBLEM

As explained in Chapter 1 (see section 1.3), the problem investigated in this study refers to the under-representation of women at leadership level in TVET colleges, particularly in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Against this background the research question is therefore:

*What do the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector?*

The subsidiary questions are:

- What were respondents' general experiences in their roles as leaders in the TVET college sector in the Western Cape?

- How did gender transformation affect respondents in their career progression (if at all)?
- What strategies did respondents adopt to deal with gender-related issues?

I interviewed all the respondents on the topic of their general experiences in their roles as leaders during their career progression with specific reference to gender transformation. Prior to the mergers, almost all colleges in South Africa had male principals with only a few women exceptions. In the Western Cape, there were no women principals. In her previous career in another province, Libby “had not met many Afrikaans-speaking individuals from Afrikaans—Afrikaner communities” [line 71]. But apart from the Afrikaans organisational culture, she was perplexed by the male domination in the college sector.

I cannot think of one woman that was heading any of those campuses at that time. Not one. They were all males in either deputy positions, or—and when I looked at who were the—where were the women sitting? They were sitting in—as department heads, or as—you know? There were also a lot more women in support functions. I looked at the marketing department at that time. It was the marketing forum and uhm, I don’t recall a single male at that time. So, I began to realise that your administrators are women. Your marketing and support staff—women. But your heads, your decision-makers are males. So it was very clear to me that here’s a sector who’s been in existence for years and years and years. And it was very male-dominated. It was also a—I don’t believe in racial classification at all, I try not to refer to people in those terms, but for the sake of referring to transformation, I’d use that statement that, it was mainly white males at the time [Libby: lines 116-125].

The conceptual framework derived from the theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 indicated that the gendered experiences of women were plagued by gender-related notions such as gender stereotyping and many different gender-related challenges. Thus, gender stereotyping and gender-related challenges will be highlighted next as these two elements emerged to be part of the *problem*—also the third element of this narrative study’s plot structure.

#### **4.4.1. Gender-related notions**

As was pointed out in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2.3), gender-related notions such as gender stereotypes are mental shortcuts whereby people assign traits or a distorted



view of a person or thing. Respondents confirmed that gender stereotyping arose all too often, even if it meant jeopardising normal procedures, such as a chair-person who should not take minutes, but was expected to do so, because she was the only woman in the meeting and stereotypically, men do not take minutes. Kdriana explained:

It was the [portfolio managers of the six colleges]—and I was the only woman there—in the beginning. Uh, [name of portfolio manager] there at [name of college] and so on. It irritated me endlessly because I'm the chair-person, I must prepare the agenda, I have to keep the minutes, I have to take everything down in writing and so on. And I just decided, oh no, do you know what, it did not comfort me that they could provide verbal input; people also have to do something. So it—when I withdrew from it, the whole thing just collapsed [Kdriana: lines 296-302, addendum F, 41].

Stereotyping women as those who had to do all the administrative work, annoyed her, but, by the same token, she stereotyped men as people who were poor 'do-ers' and only gave verbal input, although she was cautious about generalising.

As EXCO—for me it was yet again these, uh, the verbal input, but do not expect the men to go out and type something small, or whatsoever. I do not know if this is a common male thing. It certainly is not my husband's thing. He is—he did everything. Uhm, I can live with that as long as there is a balance. I will do the typing, but then I want value from your input. You know, so—yes. But I won't be held back, if I don't want to, then I will not [Kdriana: lines 296-310, addendum F, 42].

Gender-stereotyping offended Libby. As she enjoyed engaging with people, she preferred to address gender-stereotyping comments straight away. "The moment somebody feels judged—that you're gonna put a label on me, their walls go up and they—so I always try to engage" [lines 430-431]. Sometimes she addressed a destructive gendered remark more succinctly. "I would say, 'You know, that's not the way we address women and that's not the way we speak about women'" [lines 434-435].

Also in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2.3), Diaz-Garcia and Welter (2011:391) portrayed women as the "other" gender, the moment the stereotyping concerned leadership. Thus, women had to escalate their performance constantly to be valued in a male-dominated environment. In Chapter 4 (see section 4.3.2), Uurona, Kdriana, Pamela, Ctjana, Libby, Sindy, Frieda and Oenandi all admitted that they worked extremely hard. Sindy stated, "But then, if you wanted to evolve, you needed to work almost a



hundred times harder, in order to outperform the males” [lines 44-45]. Dnelle had her first child, so she was only allowed to act in the post, but after six months, she resigned. “I worked myself to a standstill. Because my quality—what I see as quality and the quality of someone else can vary. And it demoralised me a lot to redo other people’s work [...]. We worked during holidays [...]. I worked myself to a standstill for the fundraising events” [Dnelle: lines 216-217, 264, 355]. She also told me about an experience where a male colleague had stereotyped her.

Then one day, then—anyway there was a temporary position to be filled. That was also occupied by all the men. I was then almost like the HoDs of nowadays – a head of department [...]. As a woman I then got the post, but now temporarily for that period. But one of the men, [name of staff member], told me [...], ‘Yes, it is indeed you women that do all the’—wait, how did he say?—‘that do all the little things to be noticed and-and then you get the posts.’ I then said to him, ‘You know [name of staff member], I would keep my mouth’—I did not stand back for them—‘I would keep my mouth shut if I were you, because in the afternoons you generate extra income by driving the school bus—we started at seven o’clock, because it was hot and we stopped at one o’clock—I said, ‘One o’clock you leave without a bag or a suitcase in your hand. You do not prepare anything. And I do my preparation and I still do sport’ [Dnelle: lines 162-176, addendum F, 44].

Gender-stereotyping often came with rudeness too. Usalia was quite vexed with male executive managers and principals who ignored women at meetings and, even worse, stereotyped her as the personal assistant of a subordinate male who accompanied her. She believed that society conditioned people to put men on pedestals and that they do not expect women to be successful.

I also see it when we go for workshops. They don’t need to even greet you because they don’t see you. You live invisible. They will greet their male colleagues shoulder to shoulder, hand shake and they would just think that you’re the PA or you’re the secretary that’s walking behind the male, whereas you could be holding a higher position than the male counterpart that you’re walking with. There are very often times when we go for meetings and your subordinate male colleagues are respected more, because although you may be their-their leader, you know, higher than them, they’re respected, because it’s taken society as—kind of conditioned people, to—if you’re with a male, they’re either your husband, or they’re your boss (laughter). Although you use to be their boss. Yeah. I think a lot of women also say, if they are of the title

of doctor and they go anywhere with their husbands, if it's accommodation or anything, they will call her husband 'doctor' [laughter], and women do take this. Women are doing it. They don't expect women to be successful. And you know, they immediately put a man on a pedestal. It's just like that [Usalia: lines 317-330].

Prior to the mergers of colleges in 2002, leadership positions were almost all reserved for men. Older men. Sindy stereotyped the leaders as follows:

In education, you needed to be fifty. And that again, it just confirms the perception that you needed to be in education fifty years before you get promotion and then another fifty years, until you get promotion and irrespective of how you perform, the males were always channelled to go into the next layer [Sindy: lines 10-13].

The experiences described above, indicate that the under-representation of women in TVET college leadership positions was intensified by recurring gender-stereotypical incidents that disadvantaged women in achieving top positions. Furthermore, the conceptual framework derived from the theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 pointed out that the gendered experiences of women were not only plagued by gender-stereotyping, but also by many different gender-related challenges.

#### **4.4.2. Gender-related challenges**

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3), McNae and Vali (2015:294) pointed out that men tended to undermine highly-skilled women, whether it was through gatekeeping on appointment committee panels, intense surveillance after being appointed in leadership positions, downplaying women's achievements or subtly challenging them.

Pamela, Sindy, Frieda, Usalia and Uurona complained about the tendency of male senior executive managers to undermine or ignore new ideas of women in meetings, even if these ideas came from their [the men's] women superiors. Then again, if the same idea came from a man, the idea was accepted immediately. Usalia explained, "If *you* said a thing, it's gonna be *not* accepted. It's not gonna fly. If you said it first, but they just said it after you and you say, 'Yes, I think it's a great idea', it flies" [lines 335-337]. She continued, "I-I see how they switch off if I had to say something because I'm a woman [...]. Really, they *visibly* switch off" [lines 312-314]. Although Usalia confirmed that her male seniors respected her and "had very good experience in how they respected [her]" [line 46-47], she could see where they would shut off naturally; "naturally shut off – I could see that. And I don't think they even knew they were doing

it, but they were doing it. You know, it's just inherent. Men stop thinking after—they stop listening after a while too" [Usalia: lines 48-50].

Frieda was more adamant that this behaviour was offensive. It frustrated her so much that she generalised and stereotyped men as bad listeners.

Or there will—what I also found, was that—the moment you make a proposal and put it on the table, then they give you a hard time, where if it is a man who puts the proposal on the table, they will *quickly* [tone of voice very high] brush over it and go on. And *accept* it. And I saw it—and I still see it now. I still see it *now* when the principals meet with the regional office and [name of a senior woman official at DHET] put something on the table, then they *grind* her. Because, for me, it almost borders on rudeness. Because they are not open to listen. I find that men do not listen very well. They are not open to new ideas [Frieda: lines 176-183, addendum F, 45].

Pamela described a similar experience among the six principals twice during her interview with me. "You say something in a meeting. Then they, in a way, ignore you. But then that person says exactly the same thing what I've said and then that person is listened to. I'm talking about my male counterparts" [lines 100-102]. Later on, in the interview, she formulated the same problem in another way. "If the man comes up with the proposal, it is fine. If I come up with the proposal, they laugh at it" [line 232, addendum F, 46].

Uurona made peace with this behaviour although it did not intimidate her.

So, I was not scared of them [the men]. I said my say and they—they didn't oppose me. But no, you *mos* [sic – meaning indeed] now know how it works in the boardroom. They allow you to say your say, but it doesn't mean it's gonna go your way. So *that* obviously, I learnt from the very beginning—but for me, I had the satisfaction, as long as I stated my point. I knew I was gonna be outvoted [Uurona: lines 102-106].

McNae and Vali (2015:294) also mentioned the notion of gatekeeping in Chapter 2. Frieda and Oenandi complained about senior men who manipulatively limited and controlled their [Frieda and Oenandi] access to information.

I think that you will find it interesting—is that the-the men at deputy level keep everything close to their chests. They share nothing. For instance, uhm, even though you ask for it in meetings, 'But what is the financial status of the college, where do

we stand with finances?’ so on, that information is not shared with you. Or you get these snippets of information [Frieda: lines 149-154, addendum F, 47].

Oenandi was annoyed with her immediate male deputy principal who did not easily share his insights whilst she had to grapple with all the new terminology,

... but within a month, I was on top of the game [...] because I’ve given myself a task that this man on top of me—*hy was braggerig oor hierdie SETA-ding waarvan net hy weet* [he was boastful about this SETA-thing that only he knew about]—I’m going to show him. Yes, he will frustrate me sometimes and I used to think, ‘Why have I taken this job, why do I have to listen to a boy who is talking nonsense to me?’ [Oenandi: lines 343-347].

Usalia highlighted the same problem—withholding information, from another angle.

So, I reported to a woman and uhh, some women also see you as threats hey? Women leaders, they see you as threats. And there they use their position to hold you back. Without, uhh, you know, telling you anything. So they just use their position to hold you back. That is there as well. Well *now it needs* [raised rone of voice] to not just say, it’s the men against the women, it’s women-to-women discrimination too. That exists in any work environment [Usalia: lines 39-43].

Usalia’s experience revealed that under-representation of women leaders in colleges were almost certainly a universal problem and that women themselves were most likely partially guilty of the slow change in gender transformation in the sector.

You know, I was speaking to another managing director of a TVET college in the UK [...]. And she’s a black woman from Nigeria that’s working there [UK], obviously a citizen of the UK now. And she was the first black woman appointed as a managing director of a TVET college. And she also cited her problems, her challenges. She said what she had to put up with and cope with, to gain respect in that space. And she is running one of the most outstanding TVET colleges in the UK. And we were just sharing, you know, notes on how to reach them [the men]. And, what I was sharing with her, is no different to what she was sharing with me in experience. And I tell you what, it’s across the globe. It’s not a South African phenomenon. No. Not at all. But women have a—women are the *worst* contributors to that change being so slow, hey? You know, as a woman in leadership, I carry a portfolio equal to many other males in this organisation. Which is higher than a lot of males in this organisation, right? And higher than a lot of men and women and many—there’s

many women that are in the same category. *But*, if you sit in a women conversation and you use—I'll cite one example—and you say to the person, 'Oh, I have to do an international trip and uh—I have to go between this date and that date.' The first response you'll get from them will be, 'Aaa, how will your husband manage?' That's a woman, hey? That's a woman's response. That's not a man's response. But, if I said the same thing, 'Oh, my husband has to do an international trip and this is the dates.' The response is, 'Oh, that's great. When is he leaving?' *Why* will a woman ask you that? And I asked them the same question. So who is the weaker sex here? So my husband can pack his bags and leave. There's no problem, because I'm so competent, I'll manage *everything* in the house and I'll cope with life. But if I had to go, who will look after him? But I—I'm maybe uhh, equal or higher than his portfolio and society has conditioned women to think that we are inferior. And males should be—males should be always considered first and given priority in everything. You know. So—so *that* itself is so wrong. That itself is so *wrong* [Usalia: lines 317-370].

As the main focus of this study was to find out what the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector, I also asked the respondents if and how gender transformation affected them.

Senior staff turn-over affected Oenandi negatively. Moreover, it seemed as if gender transformation policies did not help either. With a women principal, men were constantly appointed as Oenandi's superiors. She tried to break through the so-called glass ceiling, but was never shortlisted for a deputy principal position, although she had to train five deputy principals. "So this one left—the first one. Now I had to step up in here. But now, somebody will be put on top of me again, who knows nothing about the college. And I had to help again" [lines 438-440]. It frustrated her that at least two of the male deputies were dependent on her. "[T]his guy was always coming to me and say, 'Oenandi, I'm relying on you'. It was a deputy principal" [lines 447-448]. When he left, she was really negative.

Now another new male deputy principal comes in. I was negative when he started. I was really negative. I was really like—he must see how to handle it, but he was humble when he started. He humbled himself to me and say, 'Oenandi, can we work together?' [...] He said, 'TVET is new to me. I don't know how to handle the TVET. How are you doing these things? I need to learn.' I sat with him till late hours, trying

to make him understand this and—here is the operational plan. ‘How are you dealing with the operational plan? I’ll do the academic strat [sic] plan for you and then you just change it for you. Are you fine? I’ll present it if you are not OK’ [Oenandi: lines 457-465].

At this stage of her life, Oenandi “made peace” [line 752] with the fact that she would not obtain a deputy principal position at her own college. “I was not shortlisted in this position” [line 437], but “It has taken away my self-image” [line 749]. She saw deputy principals come and go. “I was now part of the top management meetings. I hear the fire from the woman [CEO]. I said, ‘Am I going to be able to stay long here? I don’t know. The one deputy left. The other deputy left” [line 430-432]. She experienced intense women-to-women discrimination and speculated that it was the CEO who kept her back. “I would be better off if it was a man on top of me” [line 610]. It almost appeared as if the notion Van Zyl (2009:32) called the PHD (push-him/her-down) syndrome, as described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3), surfaced here, with a woman undermining another woman.

Because for quite some time I didn’t want to apply for any higher position anywhere. For quite some time I was feeling negative about all the colleges, because I was thinking they are all the same. I will see all managers as the same. Up until I’ve made peace [Oenandi: lines 749-752].

Due to gender equity policies that were not in place yet, Pamela also hit the so-called glass ceiling. She was not shortlisted for a deputy principal post, possibly due to gender discrimination.

But the deputy—both Mr [surname of principal] and Mr [surname of vice-principal] left the institution. So new people came on board. So I think as much as I was working hard, a younger male was appointed as deputy above me. So again, this male syndrome surfaced. As a woman you are not good enough and at the end, a young man that had no experience—ordinary teacher—shoot from a post-level one to a three, a deputy [Pamela: lines 27-31].

Kdriana was cautious, maybe too conscientious, to admit that the equity laws affected her appointment as deputy principal and wanted to believe that she deserved the promotion on merit. “I’d like to think I got the promotion on merit, but I cannot tell you whether the equity legislation has helped me. Talking comes easy for me, [hopefully I

was] good enough in the interview” [lines 57-59, addendum F, 48]. Given Kdriana’s history of applying for promotions nine times, she certainly paved the way for upcoming women leaders and demonstrated that the glass ceiling is indeed not that sturdy, although her last promotion came at a very late stage of her career.

If it had not been for a moratorium, Frieda believed that she would have been appointed as a principal prior to the college mergers. She acted in the position of principal at one college where the principal had been discharged, while, simultaneously, she was a deputy principal at another college in a neighbouring town [lines 74-76]. “I often had to do three people’s work in the sector simultaneously” [lines 341, addendum F, 49]. When she applied for all five principal posts in the Western Cape in 2003, she hit the so-called glass ceiling almost seven years before she was appointed in a deputy principal position. Her work experience was equal to those of the men, and her qualifications were better, but five men were appointed in the five advertised posts [lines 77-81]. In order to “crack” the glass ceiling, she applied for fifteen deputy principal posts [line 77] before she was appointed as college principal a few years ago.

But I always felt I fought against the glass ceiling. And I always said, ‘If I could only *crack* [raised tone of voice] it, so that the next person can go through, it will be fine with me.’ But I will continue to bump against and-and I will offer a challenge to break through [Frieda: lines 146-148, addendum F, 50].

Male leaders groomed Dnelle for her position as college principal. Her story exposed a woman with ambition, with tenacity and a hard-working nature—amongst other strong personality traits—declaring a dispute and registering a class action for the deputy principal position [line 431]. Her willingness to relocate, contributed to her successful career progression. She was finally appointed as a principal, although gender discrimination through the years decelerated the process for almost too long.

Gender-transformation policies fast-tracked Usalia’s career, although her experience in the corporate sector for 14 years was also a contributing factor [lines 424-425]. Yet, she believed that nothing would have stopped men from appointing more men in senior positions if it had not been for gender-equity legislation.

I think it has, because—as a post-level five, I was the first black woman to be appointed in this college. Yes and if the—if legislation didn’t educate the males to pay



attention to that, then it wouldn't have happened. Nothing would have stopped them to appoint another male. You know? So I'm not saying they appointed me *because* of that, I'm saying it has con—it has sensitised them to be aware to look for competence in women as well. And that has assisted—it has also assisted all those acts and policies. It assisted men to think about how to use uh—that dynamism in the workplace. Which is good—which is good [Usalia: lines 284-291].

Gender transformation affected Libby's career progression positively. "Yes, I can definitely tell you it did, because I think TVET colleges, at the time, were—we were under tremendous pressure to transform" [lines 357-359]. For a while she reflected on equity in general and then she continued,

... women were excluded in the past. Whether you were white, coloured, black, Indian, you were excluded. So [...] you would have *not* found a dominance of women in the TVET sector. It was very few. It was very male dominated [Libby: lines 362-364].

The gender transformation policies fast-tracked Sindy's career progression. She obtained a deputy principal position at a relatively young age.

I think for all women, across the board, because you were competing now in a different space. So because you were given the gap there, you were able to fast-track going up. But if it wasn't for that, I most definitely would not be in my position now. I would definitely not. Because age was against me and my colour was against me. I was one of the youngest women, climbing the ladder the fastest. [...] I remember, I was jumping already in my twenties, so by the time I got to *this* post, I was in my early thirties. I was very young to jump into this post [Sindy: lines 375-381].

Coming from an industry background, Sindy acknowledged that her experience counted in her favour. But, "I think it's sometimes just—I think it was the right place at the right time. Uhm, things just fell into place [and] at that time—it was ground breaking times" [lines 420-426]. Maybe, for Sindy, more ground breaking than for the other respondents. She shared some other stories with me about harsh, aggressive and rude leaders (men and women) who came from different cultural groups than herself and concluded, "I'd rather the devil you know, than the devil you don't know. [...] You learn to adapt, you learn to pre-empt. And you work around that" [lines 476-478].



Ctjana was not intimidated by men easily. Yet, her strong personality did not safeguard her against gendered experiences. Although she experienced fierce gender discrimination early in her career, she came through the ranks and was appointed in a post-level five position without any difficulty. She admitted that gender-transformation policies might have assisted towards her last appointment. Something else also bothered her. She mentioned the word “chauvinist” [lines 156, 310, 370] a few times. “But uhm, my biggest problem is the youngsters (men and women) that are coming up. That’s one of the main reasons why I’m not—it’s not, uhm, I can’t do it anymore” [lines 157-159]. Ctjana could not stand the fact that the youngsters at central office thought they “know everything” [line 161]. “And I’ve told him [a deputy principal], ‘Don’t you ever talk to me like that again [...]. I could be your mother. And I’ve got much more knowledge than you. So don’t you ever do that again’” [lines 161-164]. Ctjana was pleased to say that he [the deputy principal] refrained from doing it again.

Uurona did not specifically indicate that she was favoured as a result of gender transformation policies and “actually never felt as if [she] couldn’t break through the so-called glass ceiling” [lines 84-86].

Ten women shared their experiences with me. Frieda and Oenandi complained about men who did not easily share information and lacked an inclusive leadership style. Libby, Pamela, Uurona, Usalia and Sindy’s careers had been fast-tracked either due to gender transformation policies or men who saw potential in them and head-hunted or groomed them for senior positions. Kdriana, Ctjana and Dnelle experienced fierce gender discrimination. Frieda and Oenandi could not crack the so-called glass ceiling for a long time. The respondents’ experiences described here, indicated that possible prejudicial and societal conditioning might have been a contributing factor to the gender discrimination women faced in their career pathways to leadership. Moreover, it appeared as if gender transformation policies only assisted some of the younger women in their career progression.

Apart from the challenges that were highlighted above, Walker (2013:84) pointed out more barriers to women’s career progression in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3). That included sexism, isolation, racism, lack of role models, tokenism, a culture of long working hours, family and domestic responsibilities, lack of self-belief, limited women leadership positions, women gatekeepers and a lack of peer support and backing from

seniors. Many of the above barriers arose as part of the *problem* in this narrative study and, where these barriers already became evident earlier in this chapter, they were not repeated in this section. In the next section, the respondents' experiences of their *career pathways*, illustrated in the analytical framework (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2), are described as part of the *action* (and the fourth element of the plot structure).

## 4.5 ACTIONS

The respondents' gendered experiences produced in the fourth element of this narrative study's plot structure were re-storied in stages of the respondents' career pathways. *Career pathways* are usually divided into three stages, as described by Moorosi (2010:560) and Acker (2012:423) in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.1) and consisted of learning, acquiring and performing leadership. The conceptual framework indicates that gendered experiences of women leaders are linked to all three phases of their career pathways and can therefore emerge at any of the three different phases as pointed out below. *Learning leadership* is narrated first.

### 4.5.1. Learning leadership

Libby remembered an incident at one of her first inter-college meetings where her CEO's peers, in her presence, made sexist remarks about her to her CEO that "really blew [her] away" [line 56].

So I was new in the institution. And I accompanied my now CEO to some meeting. It was the very first time I was accompanying my CEO to this meeting so obviously he had to introduce me to his peers, or his counterparts. And there was one remark—and I cannot recall the exact words, but the person made sort of a remark to the point of where it was in a sense teasing my CEO because of this new, young, attractive, uhh, colleague of his. And he was very [raised tone of voice] embarrassed and felt very awkward, because he knew the kind of person that I am. And I looked like in absolute disgust—and I realised that, even at *that* [raised tone of voice] level you had people in positions, who had no clue how to relate to women as equals. But anyway, I just recall that very vehemently, very clearly and I remember my CEO, at that point up till today—my CEO's discomfort, because clearly it didn't sit well with him [Libby: lines 56-65].

Fortunately, Libby also had "refreshing" [line 87] experiences and support from male colleagues and her CEO during her early years at the college.

That was in 2004 and I was at [name of campus]. That was the one campus, where we really saw that rich diversity and—I also want to say, I really found *tremendous* support in two of my managers. The one was at that point campus head of [name of campus], absolutely remarkable man and I was very fortunate to go overseas with him and he and I—we took a trip together. I didn't really know him that well. But in that two-and-a half weeks that we were away in the United States, it really gave me an opportunity to understand, the diff—you know, understand him and I found he was an Afrikaner male who had only taught in the townships. He had a very interesting life story, but highly respectful of women and very gender sensitive. Very gender sensitive. Very sensitive to embracing diversity and I just thought this was so refreshing for me. And he shared his story about serving in the military. And you know, for the first time I began to realise what a wonderful place we had come to in our country, because I realised that here I was able to have these wonderful conversations with my CEO and my other colleague and I remember saying to my CEO one day, 'Do you know that you and I could have met at the end of a barrel of an AK47?' I said, 'That could have been our'—and I said to him, 'You know, isn't it amazing now, ten years later, or 20 years later, that was how wild it was in the '80s? That you and I are working toward building a South Africa through education and training. How powerful is that? The paths of our lives could have been so different. And if it wasn't for people like Nelson Mandela and those other people that contributed toward reconciliation, that this is where we would be.' So when I drill it with my other male colleague, we would also talk about that and I realised at that time, it's really about very little to do with whatever your racial classification. It's got to do with your own socialisation. And a conscious choice amongst men and women, to rethink their conditioning. Because in my CEO I realised that this individual had gone through a remarkable transformation in his own thinking. He must have been on his own journey to be able to get to the place where he could work through all of those stereotyping, unpack that, look at things anew. My colleague demonstrated exactly the same. So for me it was so wonderful, because it was like we were all on this journey of transformation in the country but also inside of ourselves. Me as a woman, them as men, us as South Africans, together as educators. We were all in this path together of change and looking at things and saying, 'Look! Here I've got to go and think, reflect on this myself, but here we are talking and we're growing together and we're discussing and debating together, because we're building this college and we're building this college for a particular purpose' [Libby: lines 179-206].

Uurona's first boss was a male who "threw her into the deep end from day one" [line 55]. He made her responsible for the finances of the college, she "obviously worked very hard" [line 55-56] and acquired leadership skills right from the onset of her career.

Pamela's career and leadership skills were also fast-tracked by her CEO and, like Usalia and Libby, she regarded the CEO as her mentor.

There was one time that I had to do the strategic planning of [name of college] and I was like, 'Ai, *die manne* [oh, these men]', and what-what and I had to keep doing that. But, I was like—I didn't do well, I could feel, but that was exposure [...]. Sometimes I felt like it was in the deep end. But that deep end prepared me for the role [Pamela: lines 58-66].

Like Libby, Uurona and Pamela, Ctjana was still young and in the *learning leadership* phase of her career pathway when her career progression was fast-tracked by a male CEO.

And then I applied at the college. I'd been teaching there at night classes. And when I got there, it wasn't very large and we had a head master, [but] he was a non-existent rector. He was absolutely non-existent. So [name of vice-rector] used to run the place. And I've realised that [name of vice-rector] is struggling [...]. So I said, 'Is there anything that I can help you with?' So he said, 'Ja, Ctjana, I really need help with the stats.' So I started helping him and then [name of rector] retired and he got promotion. The post-level two came around, but I had xx children and I was actually going through a divorce. So [name of CEO] said to me, 'Ctjana, are you going to apply?' So I said, 'No, I can't spend the time you spend here, because you spend evenings here.' He said, 'Ctjana, but you're doing the job.' So I applied and I got the job. We didn't have interviews in those days. So I got a slightly different—because he's been a great help to me. And then, the same thing happened with the post-level three. I—he said to me, 'The post-level three came up.' He asked, 'Are you going to apply?' I said to him, 'But [name of CEO], I don't know if I can give you the time that you deserve.' And he said to me, 'Apply.' And I did [Ctjana: lines 98-116].

During her *learning leadership* days, Ctjana could recall a nasty gendered experience where she had to fight for women's rights regarding maternity leave remuneration. She could not stand the fact that men dictated to women. Moreover, another women colleague was apathetic about the matter and gave her no support.

I sat in an HR meeting one day, discussing HR matters at [name of campus]. There was one lady and myself. The rest, all men. I think there was about twenty of us and they were discussing maternity leave. And, they wanted to say that, uhm, that a person who's paid by the college, must get their money from the unemployment. OK, that's the ones on contract—must get their money from the unemployment. Because, if you worked for the government, you got a higher salary. So I said to them, 'But what about the other? The difference?' That's not their problem. I was fuming and I gave them a thousand words. And sitting next to me was the other lady. So I went like this to her [poke her in the ribs] and said, 'For heaven's sake, open your mouth.' She said, 'What for, Ctjana?' She says, 'It doesn't affect me.' I was fuming. Anyway, I went on so about it, that they actually disbanded the meeting and it was only two years later, that *that* thing came through and they agreed to pay the difference. But I was not going to accept it. How can a whole lot of men tell a woman? It-it doesn't work like that for me. For heaven's sake, it really does not [Ctjana: lines 208-220].

Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.1), pointed out that potential leaders equip themselves through acquiring qualifications, attending training workshops, and partaking in colloquial networks during the first phase of their career pathways (Moorosi, 2010:560). Dnelle, Libby, Pamela, Usalia, Uurona, Frieda and Kdriana all benefitted from doing further studies or attending training courses. Dnelle's CEO took her with him to leadership courses, such as a "performance workshop" [line 321] for principals. Usalia attended short courses "to empower myself—at my own expense, because I didn't wait on anyone" [line 438]. Kdriana did not hesitate to enrol for courses when she needed to equip herself. "When I do something, I want to be the expert of what I'm doing. And then I just enrol for a course and over and above everything else, I do that as well, because it empowers you" [Kdriana: lines 390-392, addendum F, 51]. Libby was signed up for training while she was still serving her notice period at her previous job. "And by the time I got here, I was linked to two other staff members on this course. Anyway, that support was there before I even came" [Libby: lines 241-243].

Respondents narrated a variety of incidents during the *learning leadership* phase of their career paths. Fortunately, not all experiences were negative. Sexism emerged, but great conversations also cropped up. Quite a few respondents' careers were fast-tracked by males, but, in certain narratives, it appeared as if the males purposely

exploited the women to their own advantage. In the second phase of the career pathway, *acquiring leadership*, potential women leaders endured more gender discrimination—men-to-women and women-to-women discrimination and, to prove themselves, most of the respondents worked much harder than their male counterparts.

#### 4.5.2. Acquiring leadership

The theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.1), drew attention to workloads, domestic and/or family responsibilities, unfamiliar approaches to managerialism, and intensified accountability and surveillance that were all factors that could adversely impact on aspiring women leaders (Acker, 2012:413).

Although Libby regarded this phase of her career pathway, *acquiring leadership*, as “a very exciting time in [her] life” [line 207] where she journeyed toward another job focus, “because I was becoming very knowledgeable about the vision for FET at the time” [lines 209-210], not all was plain sailing. She ascribed her career progression to the input of supportive managers, men and women, who valued her contribution, but also admitted that women who moved into management positions, constantly felt that they had “to work a lot harder to prove themselves” [lines 227-228].

Looking at the documentation I had a clear understanding of where the government saw—we were still a provincial competency, we were still reporting to the WCED, but I understood very much where FET was. And FET was about broadening support for students, introducing a lot more services and I began to engage with my management at the time around expanding the focus of supporting students [...]. But I *do* wanna say once again, when you are a woman in any job sphere and you’ve got the support of managers, be it men or women, who capture that vision and understand and value your contribution, they don’t try to box you in and it is absolutely remarkable what can happen to you as an individual [...]. It is so remarkable when you—as a woman, I think, more than anything else as a woman—when you feel valued in the workplace. When you feel that you’re understood. But not only that. When you feel that you are supported. There is nothing worse than a woman or a man in the workplace who’s not supported, who doesn’t feel valued [...]. I think very often, generally speaking, women often feel they have to work a lot harder to prove themselves. And particularly when you are moving into management. It’s like you have to prove that you can do the job. It’s something where, I think, men, generally speaking, not all the time, but

generally speaking—it's almost assumed they can do the job. But women tend to find that they have to prove themselves [Libby: lines 210-232].

Libby soon realised that some of the other Western Cape colleges had a far more conservative approach than her own college and she came across a few gendered incidents that were in sharp contrast with her own college.

My world as a manager is allowing me to meet people from other institutions. What struck me a lot was practices very different to the institution that I was in. I found a far more conservative approach. And I'll be very honest with you. For example, uhm, in the other colleges I found them—even at the management level the roles of men and women—I'll never forget this one time. I was in a meeting and it just blew me out of the water. There was senior staff at that meeting I was attending and the—and a senior woman was serving the tea. Now, there's nothing wrong with serving the tea, because I think it's just a kind thing to do. But it was almost as she was expected to serving the tea, as if it was her role. If I sat in meetings, my CEO would say, 'Who wants tea, can I serve—can I make tea?' You know, for me that was like—or if he was offered tea by a woman, he was very sensitive to that, you know? If he was offered tea or if a women colleague around the table would get up, he would say, 'No-no-no—I will make my own tea.' He was very sensitive to being perceived as somebody who—you know? And it seems like a *small* thing, but it's something that you pick up, because it was a reflection of the relationships [Libby: lines 264-280].

Ctjana recalled a similar gendered incident when she had to serve the tea during a college council meeting, but different to the way Libby had experienced it. When Ctjana refused to serve tea any longer, the male-dominated college council were taken aback at first, but eventually accepted the fact that they had to pour their own tea.

During meetings, they'd expect me to pour the tea and to take minutes. Always. Because I was the only woman. And I'm—one day, I don't know how long it lasted, I'm not very good at time, 'cause everything go so fast for me. I turned around and said, '[name of present CEO], I'm not doing it any more.' I said, 'I'm not pouring the tea any more and I'm not taking the minutes. I'm not the youngest here anymore, I'm not the newest in the meeting. I'm not doing it.' He looked at me. Anyway, got someone else to take the minutes. But he still waited for me to pour the tea. I can still picture that first meeting. And everyone, all college council were sitting there and they were all men. And I didn't do a thing and they all looked at me and I looked at them. Eventually one guy got up and then he poured the tea. And then they got the



message. So I thought, 'No man, this is just not working for me.' [Ctjana: lines 130-138].

Ctjana talked about many of her women colleagues, also in their *acquiring leadership* phase of their career pathways, who were scared of victimisation. Libby encountered an example of such an incident during an inter-college meeting.

And then there were the power dynamics. I remember walking away from some meetings thinking, you know, the stereotypical roles are still followed and manifested even in meetings. I also remember sitting at a meeting one day and I realised that a woman in this meeting, *senior* to me, would not challenge her boss in the meeting. *Senior* to me. Here I was blabbing my mouth off, challenging that point of view, disagreeing vehemently with the senior, because at that point it was not about seniority and I remember thinking, 'My goodness me.' And then this person came out of the meeting and said, 'You know what, I really agree with what you said.' And I said, 'But why didn't you articulate in the meeting?' She said, '*Ag nee man, jy weet mos, ek kan mos nie voor my baas*—[Oh no man, you know indeed, in front of my boss I cannot—].' So I said, 'But why not?' So she said, 'You know what, you know, I'm a junior and—.' And I said to her, 'But that's got nothing to do with—.' She said, 'But you know, they wouldn't accept that likely, they'd see it as a challenge to their position.' And I also began to think about that gender, gender power play. Here she is, a senior to me, in a meeting, where she's expected to give her point of view, arguing, debating and so on and she's refusing to—she's making a conscious choice not to challenge. And that was quite interesting for me. And not once in that meeting, did the CEO say to her, 'What are your thoughts? Do you agree with me?' Or you know, 'Give me your point of view.' He never referred to her. He spoke for that unit and for that—he spoke as if he—you know? And uh, that was quite interesting. I remember that experience very well [Libby: lines 280-296].

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.1), the *acquiring leadership* phase is clarified as a stage determined by high discrimination (Blackmore, 2013:147; Acker, 2012:413) and sabotaged through bias and unfair stereotyped selection criteria, withholding women from top positions (Moorosi, 2010:549). Here the women leader found herself in an organisational culture where masculinity still dominated most of the systems and leadership approaches of the organisation. According to Acker (2012:413), the women leader had to endure masculine hierarchies, the marginalisation of women, discrimination and the preservation of gender segregation as manager/leader in a



male dominated organisational culture. Furthermore, Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.1) focused on the notion of the so-called glass ceiling that often manifested itself on the second level of the career pathway. Acker (2012:417) and McNae and Vali (2015:299) used this notion [glass ceiling] to encapsulate the difficulties potential women leaders stumbled upon during the *acquiring leadership* phase. Frieda had encountered many of the above.

What did bother me during my interviews was that uhm, a stereotype, when a stereotype uhm does your rating, then—if you do not want anyone in, you vote them low. It's just the way it works. So I cannot say it happened or it did not happen, but I think that at least one of the CEO posts—it seemed to me a decision had already been taken that the current principal would be appointed. It was in the grapevine. In the grapevine people asked you, 'Why do you apply? Because we heard they were going to appoint this one for that post and that one for another post.' And in hindsight, the six CEOs who were appointed at that time—they were three white men, two coloured men and a black woman. I think if you look at the deputies who were appointed that time, then you will also notice an interesting thing. Someone like the [women] vice-principal, formerly from [city in another province] who would be brilliant as a deputy, never received a deputy post in the Western Cape. So there were definitely horses for courses. Yes, right time, right place [Frieda: lines 90-102, addendum F, 52].

And, for example, I have always—for the academic report we submitted a report of actions in [name of her portfolio]. And then we used to submit a separate report that went to the college council. And the new principal came, then he decided, despite the fact that we had written the report, and that I had written another report that should serve before the college council, he took it out of the pack, saying he has decided that that report did not have to be included. The men do not hand in reports. They do not. We took decisions at the meeting and then we go back. Then I give feedback on what I had done, but the other had done nothing. And so it went on—year in, year out, year in, year out. And then one of those people got the principal post. That soul maddened me [Frieda: lines 165-175, addendum F, 53].

In Uurona's case the senior men at the college "looked after her" [line 83], because she was still young, intelligent and coped with a lot of the men's work, in the process boosting their own careers as well. They "paid back" [line 85] by promoting her, thus, other than Frieda, she did not experience the so-called glass-ceiling syndrome.

That male boss—my HoD was a Chinese male. And, obviously, I had two or three male principals before I left [name of town]. I must say, my experience with all of them—and one was a Muslim male and my other boss was Chinese and my other principal was a white male, but I think they—ja—I will say, they boosted me more, because they—I was of assistance also to them and their own careers obviously. And to help the college function. So I won't say they boosted me. Yes, maybe, when they had the opportunity. Yes, I think I also did boost their careers [laughter]! But I think at the same time they looked after me. So when there were posts—because there wasn't a lot of promotion posts. You almost had to wait for somebody to die! Ja, so then they, I want to say, paid back [laughter]. So I actually never felt as if I couldn't break through the so-called glass ceiling [Uurona: lines 77-86].

During the mergers, Kdriana was the first senior woman who joined her CEO at their central office. Due to her position then, she obtained extensive knowledge in different aspects of management. She was always part of the executive committee due to her portfolio and acquired leadership qualities inadvertently. Among others, she acted as a sounding board for her male CEO for many years. At that stage, the Western Cape principals' meetings were still male dominated. Thus, while she was acting as principal she avoided these meetings, because she regarded them as a talk show with no useful decisions being taken. Furthermore, she did not want to waste valuable time.

We are two women deputies and then two men. I was never the only woman in an Executive Managers' meeting. I'd say—because I was at [name of college] for so long, I was—as [name of portfolio] manager, I was the first member of staff who joined the head office. It was the former principal and his secretary. And I was the first person to move there. So I was there before any deputy or registrar, or whatever. And I knew a lot about the amalgamated college since I was but a sounding board for the CEO. And develop the thing together and and and. I am very good with writing [...]. So eventually you empower yourself without realising it. [Name of previous principal] has—could not, as [name of current principal] always said, [name of former principal] would never have left you or never have held the meeting without you, so I was always part of the EXCO [Executive Committee]. So when I became the deputy—it was a formality. In full hindsight—gender transformation. Now that I act in the principal post—I avoid the principals' meetings like the plague [laughter]. No, there were two meetings of this nature and I asked our deputy for finance—'Listen, you've always said you would help me. Man, you go, off you go!' I avoided the [male

dominated] principals' meetings, because I'm pragmatic. There's only twenty four hours—you need to put in maximum. And I did not want to sit and listen to talk and talk and talk. I attended enough of these meetings. So if—say I was the principal, I would have gone and would not have been sulking. That's part of the picture. Now I have a choice. And I have an immense lot of work. So I choose not to go. So it's not as if I would have attended with a bad attitude. So it's not like I avoid it, because there are a lot of men [Kdriana: lines 274-293, addendum F, 54].

During her interview, Dnelle had to convince the board that she could handle male staff.

When I came in, because they—the council interviewed me and uh, one of the things I've said is that—it was also about the financial experience, which—you know—, the board asked me if I could handle the male staff. Just like that. I told them that I did it all the years—all the years of my life I deal with them, because you just need to know how to handle a man [laughter]. 'No,' I said, 'I have no problem with a man, because to me, it—it's about the quality product we provide.' That's what I said. And they appointed me [Dnelle: lines 292-297, addendum F, 55].

Before Pamela applied for a CEO position, she wanted to ensure that she was well prepared and ready for the challenge. When an opportunity arose after the mergers to act as CEO, Pamela declined the offer, because she felt that she was “not ready yet” [line 70]. When she eventually applied for the position, her all-round knowledge boosted her self-confidence.

I then applied for a post-level three position. That also gave me an opportunity to act as a campus manager. They didn't fill the posts permanently. But I was interviewed and I can tell you, I worked and worked. And all the meetings were tough. I was the only woman who applied, because there were other post-level two guys at campus who also applied. They were older than me and will sit strong. Technical college males that were older than me. The interview was a good experience. Only males on the panel, but it was fine. I think it was fine, because I was close to [name of senior manager] and to [name of CEO]. So I think I was comfortable in that sense. Then, from there, after three years—before I was like good, I was exposed to all aspects of the college [...] which also gave me good experience. And that exposure was good—everything, everything. You know those days to be campus manager—that's why I'm telling my campus managers, 'Fortunately you are speaking to a former campus manager. I know how it is to be a campus manager.' And then, uh-uh—but the thing

is, when you go to these meetings, you see all this [...] and some look at you, like this—where is this [...] from? But *ek het my min gesteur aan hulle* [I didn't bother much with them]. My strategy—*ek het my min gesteur* [I didn't bother much]. I didn't really care about them. And, at the end of the day, I—when I was there—when the posts were advertised, all the CEO posts of the province, I didn't apply for any other post, because I knew I would never be able to compete with principals [men] that have been in the sector for long. But I'm going to apply for *that* post that I was offered and I declined. I applied for [name of college]. The only college. So I was not really after a senior position. I only applied for one. I applied for this post, and, fortunately, I got it. But then I knew I could do it. I was ready. I was self-assured [Pamela: lines 73-93].

Gendered experiences between women respondents also cropped up. In her new position, Oenandi picked up even more hostility and unwillingness from women staff to assist her than in her previous position. At one of the campuses, the campus manager, also her predecessor, refused to assist her.

She was now the manager before me. So she took a campus manager post, so now her post was vacant. So I had to go to [name of campus manager] to go and ask, 'What have you developed and how are you dealing with this thing?' Get [name of campus manager]—whoa! [name of campus manager] was a harsh person, like—I listened to this woman speaking as if I was just a paper. I was just listening, yeah? And I just said: 'OK.' Do you know, when you listen to a person and you just switch off and just decide, 'Go to hell man.' So I said, 'Can you give me the paper and I'll go read it on my own?' She said, 'No, this must be done this way and this way.' And I said, 'Madam, you decided to leave the post, huh, to be a campus manager. So, leave. I'll do what I want to do. But I just want NOT to revamp, or redo, what you've already did.' I was like, 'Jeeez, this woman is giving me a hard time now. Why? I'm going to show this woman, she don't know me' [Oenandi: lines 63-79].

Sindy referred to two of her former women seniors as being aggressive. She applied for a position at another college because she could no longer work under "this *rude, aggressive* [raised tone of voice] woman that needed to assert herself" [line 135]. Sindy also told me about the male CEO at her previous college who treated a women deputy principal "like dirt" [line 205]. In the process, this deputy principal started to "act" like her male counterparts as described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.1). Acker

(2012:423) provides the metaphor of an actor “doing gender” to survive in the conventional masculinist leadership culture.

So-so she would do what they did to her, she would do to everyone else. If you know what I’m saying? So it was the organisational culture. It definitely influenced that. And her style is exactly the same now. So if I look at [name of women deputy principal] now, she is also very kick-ass. She’s very aggressive. But she’s very ambitious [Sindy: lines 207-210].

The women worked hard to prove themselves – it was almost a question of how much harder could they work and how much more aggression would they put up with to excel. Furthermore, envy among women prevented some from progressing in their careers and resulted in a notion Van Zyl (2009:32) called the PHD (pull-him/her-down) syndrome, as described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3), with those women accomplishing higher positions, the victims of this syndrome. Sindy gave me an example.

I did work with dynamic people [women] that could *fly*. And we inspired each other. We really got along so great, but she was open to that. So, whereas—if I look at that same space, she was never good enough to go up. And yet, I swear to G—, this woman brought in thousands. She took the lead. To the extent that she’s left the industry. She went on her own. I think it’s really a tragedy. So, in that space—and I’m just thinking of that example. Again, the other women in there—in that department, would be jealous of this. They would see this and say, ‘You know, why is this?’ and ‘Why is...?’ The envy amongst the women was great [Sindy: lines 54-61].

Sindy was convinced that, despite the imbalance of gender equity among the deputies, her women CEO was more relentless with her than the male deputies. And she worked harder than any of the males.

In addition I’m so busy checking, that all the t’s are crossed and the i’s dotted, that I’m not leading, necessarily. So you do less of that. What we do, is that—in our team, we’ve got men and women. Uhm, three deputy male principals and one women deputy principal. And so there again, you’ve got to, uhm, she’s harder on me than any of them. And yet, out of all of them—I mean, they will tell you, out of all of them, I think [...] she gets the most out of me. And I cope. Yes, ‘*Skree maar, gaan maar aan* [You can shout, just carry on]’ and tomorrow I’ll go back again [Sindy: lines 296-301].

The above section demonstrated that the *acquiring leadership* phase of the respondent's pathways was also plagued with gendered experiences. As was evident in the biographies of the respondents (in section 4.2 of this chapter), at least half of them admitted that, were it not for gender transformation policies and legislation, their careers might not have been fast-tracked. Nevertheless, all of them confessed that they worked exceptionally hard, and a few admitted that, despite all the hard work, the so-called glass ceiling, rude men and women seniors or envious women seniors blocked their career progression during this second phase of their career pathways.

The theoretical gendered perspective in Chapter 2 points out that the third stage (the *performance phase*) of the career pathway is troubled by under-representation of women. Thus, women like Pamela, Frieda, Dnelle, Kdriana and Uurona who had acted as principals or became principals at colleges in the Western Cape, might have lacked networks and support systems that were often imperative for success in this phase.

#### **4.5.3. Performing leadership**

All the respondents mentioned that male domination complicated their positions in one way or the other during the third phase of their career pathways—especially during the time of the mergers. Networks and support systems did not exist and male peers and male subordinate staff members subtly undermined the women leaders. Little or no credit was given to the accomplishments of the women. During this *performing leadership* phase of their careers, Pamela, Dnelle and Frieda's colleges had grown despite difficult circumstances. Usalia, Frieda, Kdriana and Dnelle complained about the males' attitude in meetings which, amongst others, Pamela described below.

[W]ith little support from the province, little support for staff, little support for funding—I got the lowest funding. So I had to work hard to grow the college. *Amper soos die stiefkind* [Almost like the step child]. Exactly. And when my people go to these meetings, they were belittled. So all that discrimination, because this women of colour—and even when we have done well, we have grown, some don't really want to give that credit. You understand? But no, they don't really want to give that credit. I don't care about that. I just do what I can do. And work hard. But I can tell you, it's not easy. Specifically, even your own colleagues—sometimes you say something in a meeting. Then they in a way, ignore you. But then that person says exactly the same thing what I've said—and then that person is listened to. I'm talking about my

male counterparts. The male staff that came on board later, you could see there's some resistance, but they couldn't get it right. You know, in meetings, they back-chat—sometimes I think it is laziness, but I think I managed that [Pamela: lines 94-137].

Due to cultural rules, amongst others, men were affronted by a women CEO's leadership approach. Sindy told me that the men became apathetic in this gendered space. They reacted with quiet aggression and withdrew.

Gender space in the work place. So when we're sitting in a meeting, uhm, if I look at some of the men, the African men, they would, they don't take kindly to [name of women CEO's] *modus operandi*. They don't. They don't take kindly, because, remember, at the heart of this, 'You're a fe—woman of colour. You don't talk to me like that.' So the township influences a lot of things as well. For them that's a big thing. It's a major thing. And so what the men started doing, is they withdraw. They start withdrawing. Like [name of deputy principal] is for example in the academic space. So I don't uhm—but there is a power play between the two of them of note. You can see it. You don't have to be a sangoma, it's my favourite saying. You can see it. And so, he has quiet aggression. Quiet aggression, because she's the leader, but he resents the way she deals with things. OK? [Sindy: lines 313-320].

Ctjana's post-level five post could not be fast-tracked as easily as her previous positions due to stricter appointment procedures around equity countrywide. These equity regulations favoured black men above white women. There were women leaders who declared disputes and registered a class action to be appointed in deputy principal positions. Fortunately, Ctjana's CEO stepped in to prevent a male from snatching the post-level five position from her.

I then uhm, in 19—, it was about 2005, a post-level five came up. [Name of present CEO] decided to have who is post-level fives again to be—one in charge of engineering, one in charge of business, one in charge of hospitality, etcetera. So I applied for that post. And uhm, I'm not good in interviews. I'm a very bad interviewer. And it was a whole panel of people. And uhm, I got the job, but I heard through the grape vine, that an African guy had applied. And old [the head of the panel] wanted him. And apparently [name of present CEO]—I heard through the grapevine, he actually shouted at [the head of the panel] and said, 'The person I want is Ctjana.' And that's where I got to the post-level five [Ctjana: lines 116-123].



Although Uurona recalled the disputes and the class action, she had escaped the contest that five of the women leaders faced with the Western Cape Education Department and became one of the first deputy principals in the country during the mergers.

Anyway, so then after post-level five, I think it was about three years since I joined [name of college], the department now established a deputy [principal] for the CEO post. Remember? So that was in 2007. I came to [name of college] in xxxx. So then I obviously applied. For the [...] deputy CEO. So I was one of the first deputies to be appointed in the country. Yes! Not women deputy, remember, the Western Cape advertised first in the country. So only a few of us were appointed. There were eighteen posts and we were only six women. There was a lot of them in dispute so they were only appointed later. So we were the first six in the country to be appointed as deputy CEOs. So that was 2007. Then the others were for two years in dispute here in the Western Cape before they [were] appointed [Uurona: lines: 130- 138].

The five deputies who had registered the class action were all in the same boat. They had been acting in the deputy positions and were not supposed to be demoted in rank after acting for a certain period of time. Fortunately, they won the case and were formally appointed in the positions.

And—you know what, we registered a class action. And then—then we were five who fought together. I sent the letter to the unions. I approached the union and they helped me with the class action. Actually she [the union person] suggested it. But uh, there was uh, the person who now has helped us said, 'If you are five, we make it a class action.' And all of us were in the same boat. We had all been acting in the post for a while, and they were not allowed to just kick us out. But it was pretty interesting. My colleague is quite passionate. She said—the man [at the Western Cape Department of Education] who really knew us, said they really do not know what we do. They only worked with the principal. My colleague then said, 'I'll never speak to you again.' But look, those years—yes, that was now in 2008. And then we were indeed appointed, because they lost the case. Yes, WCED lost the case and we won [Dnelle: lines 431-440, addendum F, 56].

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3), Robertson (2015:52) drew attention to lack of funding, which affected educational leadership too. This indirectly became a challenge for men and women in their *performing leadership* positions, because, to save money, posts



were almost never filled immediately. Five of the ten respondents, Oenandi, Uurona, Frieda, Sindy and Kdriana, who were already swamped with work, had to fulfil the duties assigned to the vacant posts as well. Kdriana explained that she literally ran from the one meeting to the next. “*Ek dra hierdie drie hoede* [I wear these three hats]” [line 26]. The HR department did not understand the implications of the staff shortage. Their procedures to appoint staff were completely impractical, thus the best staff members were able to leave at short notice. Ctjana believed that HR had been incompetent.

The IT department is falling apart, because now they’re talking about all these Zimbabweans. You don’t—you only get Zimbabweans in the IT department. You don’t get the South Africans. They don’t apply. I’ve employed all these guys. And every time there’s never been a South African on the list. So, we have to get rid of them. So they give them a six months contract. Now just had one that’s resigned. She’s given us a week’s notice. And the HR is cross. They said, ‘Have you done something?’ I said, ‘I can’t do anything.’ I said, ‘You put us in this position. You told her, she’s only got six months. She’s worried about herself and her family, so what’s she’s done? She applied for a job. That they will give her a job a week.’ I said, ‘What do you expect me to do?’ I say, ‘What can you do? You can’t do a thing. The only thing you can do for—is in future, never employ her here again and give her a bad reference.’ You can’t stop this woman. And this is the sort of thing that’s happening. People feeling insecure. I think it’s this whole DHET thing [Ctjana: lines 273-283].

Ctjana appointed a white woman – the best candidate of all the interviewees. For equity purposes, the HR department at central office forced her to concede the interview results or advertise again and she refused. The next moment, Ctjana received a final warning – her HR did not even follow correct procedures in the process. For the first time in her teaching career of many years she was humiliated when she was confronted with a disciplinary hearing even though it blew up in HR’s faces.

Yes, I had a situation here that uhm, I was actually chairman of the selection committee. And we interviewed a whole lot of potential staff and the only one that was—I was happy with, was actually a white girl. So we nominated her. I didn’t hear anything. So I think she got hold of HR. So I said, ‘What’s going on? I need to know. Are we gonna get this young lady? Did she accept the post?’ ‘No Mrs Ctjana, I’m

sorry but they've decided that they want to interview again.' So I said, 'OK, but why?' 'No, uhm, they were talking about equity and we must interview again.' So I said, 'OK, no fine, when are you gonna put in the new advertisement?' So they said, 'No-no, not the new advert. We just interview those same people again.' I said, 'But I sat—I was chairman. I did not like any of those people.' 'Sorry, that's what central office has decided.' So I got a notification to say—now I wasn't chairman this time—to say that I must be at the selection. You know, on the panel. I didn't pitch up. So then I got a phone-call from the deputy CEO, of corporate services, Mr [name of deputy CEO]. You remember him? Lovely little man. 'Uhm, why didn't you arrive?' No, he sent me an email. I said, 'Because I was on the previous committee. There was no one that I was happy with. You want me to sit again and listen to the same people. And choose from the same people. There's no one that I'm happy with. So don't waste my time.' I said, 'If you'd advertise again and we had different people it would have been fine.' So next thing, I got called to the central office. 'Ctjana, can we see you?' So I said, 'Fine.' And there was old Mr [name of deputy CEO] and there was Mrs [name of another deputy CEO], uhm and the next thing, they came out with a final written warning. Now first of all, I'd never got a warning. I didn't know. I was like flabbergasted. And all they said was, 'You disobeyed a command.' I said, 'I did. And I gave you good reason why I disobeyed the command.' Anyway, I signed the thing. Uhm, then I thought to myself, 'Surely that's not the way things are supposed to be done. I should've been notified before and that—before I even sat down there, that I was coming for a disciplinary.' [Name of the present CEO] didn't attend. [He] was too *bang* [scared] to be there. And I was really upset, but I've given this college, at that stage, 25 years of [swear word] good service. And I'd spent holidays and weekends and nights and—[laughter]. Anyway, the whole thing blew up. I think, that was someone trying to prove something to me [Ctjana: lines 273-309].

Staff shortage also affected Frieda adversely during the third phase of her career pathway. The department asked her to take care of another college while she was senior vice-rector at her own college. The principal was ill and two administrative staff members had stolen money and had been dismissed. Frieda regarded herself as very organised. She turned around the poor work ethos and revived the college. When she left, the college had a positive bank balance for a change.

In my job as senior vice-rector, where I looked at HR, administration and academia, I was the caretaker principal at [name of neighbouring college]. For the department in [name of province] asked me that time to go and help out, because the college's

principal was ill and the two administrative people who had to look after the college were dismissed because they had stolen money. So in the mornings I drove from home to [name of neighbouring college]. It was a small college, 35 staff members, 480 students. I then sat with them and we planned what should happen for the day and I received feedback about what happened the previous day. Then I went to the office. There I checked whether all the finances were done for the previous day. At about half past nine, I drove to [name of own college campus in neighbouring town]. There I checked whether goods were delivered that I had ordered. I talked to the builders and contractors. Then I went back to the office, ordered the next lot of building equipment, worked with my teams, got feedback and three o'clock in the afternoon I drove back to [name of neighbouring college]. Then I was second in command of [name of own college]. Yes, I was pretty organised, very. So while caretaking at [name of neighbouring college]—they had a Coltech system, but they did not capture any students on Coltech. For three years, they hadn't done their finances and books. Their auditors' reports had been fraudulent. For three years. And the staff was sort of a mixed group. So I had a senior lecturer who looked after everything. She was a woman. And they offered popular music and business studies. But it was chaos, because when you got there at ten o'clock, everyone went home [rising tone of voice]. There was no work ethic. The grass was so [shows waist-height] high when I walked in there. Ceilings had holes in them, gutters had fallen apart. When they had to go and deposit money at the bank, a thousand rand was lost before they arrived at the bank. The book-keeping was not done—petty cash was scratched from a staff member's pocket and thrown onto the table. We went back. From the student cards to the rec—at least they kept receipt books. And everything was filed in the miscellaneous files. There were ten or twelve on the shelf and you had to know what month and what year something came in, to find it more or less. So we sorted out that filing system, we did the books retrospectively by using student cards, receipt books and bank deposit books. We did the petty cash retrospectively. Then everything was audited for the last three years. We mowed the lawns and then they came—five minutes later, they told me, 'The lawn mower is broken.' Then I said, 'Load it into the car, take it so that they can fix it.' Then they brought it back. Tomorrow it breaks again. I said, 'Put it in the car. You two go pick up the money that must be banked and you two go to the bank. So, if money is short, then you pay it in. That's how it works.' Within eighteen months, I turned it around. They [the neighbouring college] were in trouble. They were in financial trouble. When I left—when I came to

the [name of province], then they had Rxxx xxx in the bank [Frieda: lines 289-320, addendum F, 57].

Like Libby, Usalia, Oenandi and Sindy, the white male domination struck Uurona, because she was used to a very multi-racial college. Another challenge was the aged white male-dominated college council members who could not understand that her experience in a multi-racial set-up far outweighed theirs. Thus, *performing leadership*, the third and final phase of the career pathway towards leadership described by Acker (2012:423) in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.1), became a battle for Uurona.

So then I was appointed as—like they called it back then, vice-rector: academic. But I want to say something about that experience when I now just joined [name of college]. It was obviously very much male dominated around that table and there was definitely no other person of colour in the management but me. And then, on top of that, the majority male whites. And also not of my age and gender, obviously much older [laughter]. So that wasn't easy. The first two years was not easy and in council, even worse! Even *older*, also a very white male-dominated council. Look, I think, from where I came, with my experience from a previous college, it was a natural thing to open my mind. Self-assertive. And also I came from a very multi-racial college. I knew I had the experience that they don't have to work with all races. So I was not scared of them. I said my say and they didn't opposed me. But you now know how it works in the boardroom. They allow you to say your say, but it doesn't mean it's gonna go your way. I learnt from the very beginning so—but for me I had the satisfaction, as long as I stated my point. I knew I was gonna be out-voted [Uurona: lines 92-106].

Uurona described a cosmopolitan group of senior staff members whom she saw coming and going while she was *performing leadership* in the deputy CEO position. Being the only woman in the group, the men still outvoted her in the boardroom. She sensed the male domination “regime” [line 144] although she did not reveal much about these experiences or how “this whole tower collapsed” [line 144].

So, if I must say from experience from *that* team—because the previous one was actually just me and [name of previous CEO]. And then these others came – whether they were acting or permanent. And so, this whole tower collapsed now when the [name of new CEO] regime came. So beside the issues, the African male issues, they never, how can I say, speak to me, like in a rude manner or derogatory. They'd rather just be quiet and I would say my say and then obviously they knew when it

comes to voting, they will out-vote me—which was—like I said, tough luck. But I don't have experience of them calling me names, or making me feel inferior. No, no. So when [name of new CEO] then came, I think what happened there was for me also an experience now—more of—almost similar to the predominantly white male team. Here it was now just, you also will speak as a woman, now in this male group. And almost similar—OK now she's spoken, but it will go *their* way [Uurona: lines 144-151].

Dnelle sensed a power struggle between the male CEOs where some of them were more dominant leaders than others. She appreciated the support from the male CEOs but pertinently referred to the lack of support from the women counterparts.

But I mean, all of us, we are all very open with each other. Uhm, there are some people who want to be heard more than others, but I don't mind that. I also receive a lot in my—and I do not want to mention names, but I want to tell you, at [name of another college], I get quite a lot of support from the CEO. But for me it's very nice and look—he's got a way to come across sometimes as, you know—but, you know, I look past it. And I rather see the person—I really saw, the past few months—he helped me with the interdict, an example of the interdict. He helped me a lot. So that to me was quite a nice experience [...]. One women CEO has strong prin—no, I do not want to call it principles—but she has, she can often summarise quite well. But each of us has a unique personality. We women. But the men are quite caring towards us. That is what I saw. Especially [names of two male CEOs]. You know, all three of them contacted me and said, 'We hear you now also have this [student unrest]. Uhm, you must just'—and they gave me advice and whatever, but also told me, 'Do not take it personally.' I am not a person who take things personally, but it was indeed stressful for the staff, you know? But all the, those three, not from the women, the three men have supported me. With my women staff members I have a very, very good relationship [Dnelle: lines 102-209, addendum F, 58].

Five of the respondents—Kdriana, Frieda, Pamela, Uurona and Dnelle acted in CEO positions. While Dnelle was acting, her college council requested the compilation of a strategic plan in a very short period of time, which included skills and learnership training<sup>16</sup>. Dnelle and her women colleague, a post-level three campus manager,

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<sup>16</sup> New occupational programme development during the turn of the century that was prescribed by the Skills Development Act, No 97 of 1998 (RSA, 1998b).

developed learnership programmes in a stereotypically male-dominated sphere which were very successful. The two worked together—“the two of us supported each other with a man’s project” [line 310, addendum F, 59] and there were never any gender-related issues such as envy between them. Although both were very ambitious, there was no power play between the two. They had a real interest in and support for each other.

But remember, I was appointed there as vice-principal. But under a male principal. A lady on post-level two and I have applied at the same time. And we have worked together very well. We complemented each other wonderfully. You know, it was very nice. She was not afraid of work. But innovative. I like innovative people. Do you know what she has accomplished? In those years, I have—when I was the principal already, then uhm—those years the curriculum, or whatever, was probably changed a bit, but it was all about these occupational—the skills and learnerships. Brand new in those days. And it was more or less in 2002. Yes, but now I cannot remember the exact date. When [name of previous CEO] left, the board told me—because I was now second in charge—the college board told me they want my strategic plan for the college that Monday. That whole weekend I planned and included all the skills things in the plan. But [name of colleague] established and drove it. We started a learnership in the quarries next to the fire brigade. So this is now a gender story. The two of us supported each other with a men’s project. We worked together. We truly—I want to tell you, we influenced each other, because [name of colleague] is just as driven. There was no envy. Always support, never tried to intimidate me or had a burning ambition to undermine me. She had a lot of ambition, but the relationship between the two of us remained the same after I got the principal position in the amalgamated college. Sincere, I would almost say, interested in each other and supporting each other. That is what I experienced. There was never any—I immediately, when [name of previous CEO] left, I got her a post-level three position and then she managed the other campus. She, she really performed there. I had great support [Dnelle: lines 297-318, addendum F, 60].

One aspect that went unnoticed in the theoretical perspective in Chapter 2, was the notion of gossiping among women. Sindy and Oenandi experienced much gossip—a phenomenon that Sindy had not come across at her previous college where a male was the CEO. However, later on in this chapter (see section 4.6.1) she recalled

another incident where gossiping deteriorated relationships between the six vice-principals, irrespective of whether their CEOs were men or women.

So as a woman—and you see, as a woman the natural traits come in. People like in this organisation, in comparison to—but again, I can only compare [names of her recent and previous CEOs]. They don't rule by gossip. Here we are ruled by gossip. Gossip permeates the organisation, because it's a natural tendency, because [name of CEO] is a woman [...]. So what people tend to do is that they try and feed that in. So she surrounds herself—remember someone like [name of her senior manager at her previous college]—she would surround herself with women that prop her up. So people feed information to her all the time. And she uses that. Women *skinder* [gossip]. *Daais die waarheid* [That's the truth]. More than men. So if you've got the CEO that's a woman, what is happening? The women are *skindering*. The gossip that goes into there—, she knows if somebody is having an affair, or somebody is—she knows everything. *Everything*. And so what that does, is that *that* influences relationships. Or that influences the way she deals with things [Sindy: lines 322-331].

The gendered experiences that were re-storied in the three stages of the respondents' career pathways, learning, acquiring and performing leadership, revealed that the respondents were troubled by negative incidents that happened between themselves and either male or women colleagues at some or other stage of their career pathways. The above narratives illustrated that these gendered experiences encompassed a variety of incidents that taxed the resilience of most of the respondents. Their stories further revealed a lack of networks and support systems. Only one women CEO respondent alluded to informal support she had received from the three male CEOs during student unrest at the beginning of 2016. At CEO level, under-representation of women CEOs was corrected during 2015, but at deputy CEO level (also under investigation in this study), some of the respondents were still in the minority. In all the respondents' narratives, gender discrimination by their male counterparts and/or CEOs—men and women, cropped up, although some incidents were less subtle than others. An example of this would be where Dnelle had to convince the board that she could handle male staff prior to her CEO appointment [line 294].

In the next section, the respondents' *strategies and initiatives*, as well as *leadership processes and contexts*, illustrated in the conceptual framework (see Chapter 2, section 2.5), are described as part of the *resolution* (the latter also being the last



element of the plot structure) depicted in the analytical framework (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2).

## 4.6 RESOLUTIONS

Once again, the conceptual framework in Chapter 2 indicates that the gendered experiences of women in leadership coerce them to implement strategies and initiatives, and apply different leadership processes, depending on the contexts, to assert themselves in their leadership positions, which is described next.

### 4.6.1. Strategies and initiatives

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4), strategies and initiatives were highlighted to address gender transformation in the workplace. However, the respondents battled to provide me with evidence that they had successfully coped with destructive gendered experiences.

Firstly, none of the respondents provided evidence that work pressures and excessive workloads had been addressed by restructuring roles in accordance to workload as suggested by Tessens *et al.* (2011) in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4). Conversely, developing individual women through mentoring as an initiative to contribute to the advancement of women's careers (Doubell & Struwig, 2013:149), appeared to be a strategy that, although not applied deliberately, emerged in the stories of Sindy, Oenandi, Dnelle, Usalia, Libby and Pamela. Oenandi's mentor taught her the tricks of the trade.

I took it upon myself to learn most of the things from her [the mentor] and, because of my willingness, that woman took me by her hand and said, 'I'll teach you exactly how to write this thing.' [...] So, I didn't mind to sit with her till eleven o'clock at night. Because I wanted to learn these things [Oenandi: lines 471-476].

Without her realising it, one of Sindy's strategies was to use her male CEO as a mentor, a "springboard" [line 104]. She admired this CEO and regarded him as "an excellent person" [line 103].

In working at [name of previous college]—again, in hindsight, I had an excellent mentor. An excellent, excellent, excellent mentor that you didn't necessarily saw it at the time, or you didn't know it at the time, but [name of CEO] was actually an excellent person. A male mentor. I actually—*raak ek nou skoon emotional daaroor* [I become



quite emotional about it]. He was actually an excellent spring board [Sindy: lines 101-104].

Secondly, key strategies mentioned in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4) were support structures and included domestic and family support, family-friendly policies, flexi-time, childcare facilities on site and safety measures to eliminate potential sources of stress like hijacking after late meetings (Suraj-Narayan, 2005:88). Besides supportive husbands and/or family support that Pamela, Frieda, Uurona, Libby, Kdriana, Dnelle, Oenandi, Ctjana and Usalia alluded to, no respondent mentioned that she had been granted any support structures such as the other examples pointed out in this paragraph. Oenandi explained:

I've got days that I'm working in [name of neighbouring town]. And then I come in my house nine o'clock. I never moan. There's no overtime that I'm getting from the college. Whilst everybody's going home four o'clock, I'm still driving from [name of neighbouring town]. I'll arrive at the central office, open the gates and park the college car, because we are not allowed to take a college car home. Park the college car, take my car. It's risky, it's at night. Take my car, drive [Oenandi: lines 793-798].

A third strategy mentioned by Dlamini (2013:155) in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4) was sensitising society towards gender transformation initiatives. Government fast-tracked gender transformation in colleges through equity legislation (RSA, 2013:15) but that did not address subtle men-to-women and women-to-women gender discrimination that became evident in this study. None of the respondents shared incidents where they experienced that society was sensitised towards gender transformation initiatives. Libby encountered sexism, especially at the engineering campuses, "amongst males across the board" [line 94] and there were no strategies in place to sensitise staff towards gender-transformation initiatives.

It didn't matter what colour, what creed you were—I don't know if it was because they were not familiar with working with too many women. There were not many women students, there were not many women lecturers. I remember speaking to one lecturer at the time, having a wonderful conversation with her. And I asked about her experiences. She was one of the first trade-tested electrical, trade-tested artisans in the country and she was uh, Afrikaner, white women. And she was sitting there alone in that male-dominated environment. And it was remarkable how, even after years of being with her peers, she still came up against *tremendous* prejudices. And you

know, she has, she always said to me, '*Nee Mevrouw, ek moet harder werk. Ek moet meer insit. Ek kry nie enige respek nie* [No Madam, I must work harder. I must put in more. I am not shown any respect].' You know? And it was very interesting because she was much more knowledgeable. Or highly skilled and competent. And yet she always felt she had to prove herself. Very interesting. [Libby: lines 93-104].

In Oenandi's case, there were also no strategies in place to sensitise society towards gender transformation. Subtle women-to-women discrimination made her worklife strenuous until she decided to make peace with the inevitable—she used the word 'peace' 26 times during her interview. She first tried to prove herself over and over again until she finally decided to let go.

I always wanted to prove to my CEO, that I can be on top of my game and I said to myself, at some time, let me stop to prove to my CEO, let me prove to myself. Why am I proving myself for her to like me? Let me stop this. And—because this is going to frustrate me every day [...], at the end she's the boss. I started to make peace and I made peace even with her. I said, 'I'm tired and I'm no more going to apply for any senior position at this college, because I'm tired of being hurt. What I'm going to do—I'm just learning everything about the sector [...]. I'm not going to apply to any college around [name of the place] [...]. When I'm leaving here, I will go to another sector. I'll make—I'll go to another sector, or I'll go back to school. I've learnt now the sector, I know the sector. Even if I sleep, you can ask me anything of the TVET sector, I know it.' And I just said, 'Let me try and always be in my office' [Oenandi: lines 492-507].

Usalia's strategy to combat subtle gender discrimination, for example, peers and superiors withholding information from her, was to support and empower people – men and women. Although envy of Usalia could be the reason why her colleagues did not easily share their insights, support and empowering people was her way of sensitising society towards gender-transformation initiatives.

Any sub-ordinate working under me, I don't hold anything. The more you develop yourself, the more *you* [raised tone of voice] can improve and *I* can improve. So you find a lot of women, they hold onto everything. I used to say, take my job. But the moment you did *that*—people, they can outgrow you, it's fine. But the more—you don't realise that you grow with them as well. You know? So, that's about—I think it's just support and I used it to support [Usalia: lines 226-230].

The subtle men-to-women discrimination was beyond Uurona's control. She spoke almost disrespectfully about her male counterparts and tried different strategies to overcome the problem. She tried mentoring and a "mother-hen" [line 158] leadership approach, but to no avail. Eventually she experienced so many adverse emotions that she decided to "shut up" [line 153] and follow the "silent strategy" [line 154]. Her advice fell on deaf ears and she surrendered to protect herself.

And then I reached a point, I think in the last two years of their five year reign, I call it—that I decided to shut up and let them just make their wrong decisions. And see where it will end. So I used that strategy, my silent strategy. So I would only speak when it comes to my own area, and just say my say and when it comes to all these things, I know they were in any case—they were gonna do that other decision. I would just be quiet. Or don't comment. I felt very frustrated, for somebody who is very opinionated [laughter]. And also because I knew I had more experience than them, I could see the wrong decisions and where it's gonna lead to. But I spoke, for three years, trying to almost be this mother-hen, mentoring, although they were my equals or my bosses now, but I knew they don't come my route where I came through with colleges. So I was trying to almost say, 'That's the wrong thing, you must do it like this. That's how it's done.' But they won't listen. So I could not continue that. It took too much of my energy. So I stopped [...]. I felt hurt, but for me, I had to do it to protect myself. My school years made me strong, my intelligence and my values my grandparents taught me, withheld me from stooping to their level. I think why they never shouted at me, maybe they were scared of me, laying charges of racism. And they were fully aware of my intellect. So, basically, so I think it was more the fear of cases against them—racism [laughter] [Uurona: lines 152-166].

Like Sindy who had to "once again teach this man from scratch" [line 36], Oenandi saw a few male deputy principals come and go. Oenandi decided to obey instructions and show the new deputies how things work, but it distressed her. Again, her strategy was to make peace and handle these situations with dignity after she had accepted the fact that a deputy principal position was not meant for her.

With the deputies also, because they were all men, I couldn't make peace, because I had to teach them the work. So firstly I'll teach them, because I didn't want the college to fail, but I hurt. So if a person is asking, 'What or how do I handle this?' I will say, 'Give me time to plan it. I'll come back.' Then I'll have to talk to myself to say, 'Oenandi, it's not his own making. He was put in this position [...]. Firstly, take this

man as somebody who knows nothing and you need to help and for the sake of your job and the college, just do it. Nothing is going to be taken away from you. Even if they don't see you as a capable person to be a deputy CEO, it's fine. As long as, inside you—inside me, I've got that joy that I can do it.' After I've learnt that way, I started not to mind whoever they put in the position. Do you know, one of the deputies that was put at me, [...] he knew nothing. And I looked at this guy and I said, 'Oenandi, make peace with this, because if they put this guy to frustrate you, prove them wrong that you're not going to give up.' He didn't last long, were appointed at two more colleges and then left the sector [Oenandi: lines 693-709].

Fourthly, from the theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4), it became evident that training programmes and furthering your studies, could assist women with strategies against gender discrimination (Tessens *et al.*, 2011). In section 4.5.1 of this chapter, Dnelle, Libby, Pamela, Usalia, Uurona, Frieda and Kdriana mentioned that they all benefitted from furthering their studies or attending training courses to equip them with strategies and initiatives against gender discrimination. Usalia explained her experience at a training course and lessons learnt, in more detail.

The college put us through a senior management developmental programme that really helped me. Yeah, because there they teach you how to influence people, how to build relationships and helping yourself think, how to work with with diversities and helping you understand diversity in the workplace. So the way I think—in my feedback, the one facilitator said to me—when I explained this to him, I said, 'You know, I find it difficult to—when I'm speaking to a male, that I'm not getting through.' So he said, 'Usalia, the thing you need to realise—you need to get into the old boys' club.' It exists, you now? Whether it's an old girls' club, whether it's an old boys' club, it exists in the work environment. They're coming from going to school together, to work together, they build relationships, they play sport together, they sit and drink together. 'You know, Usalia, suddenly you want to tell them they need to start listening to you. So you actually have to take a moment and ask them what they're doing over the weekend. If they're having a drink you got to join them.' So I (laughing) realised that suddenly—given [my] background [...], I have to bridge that gap in the workplace—that I can't think, 'OK, uh, women have to—not be, you know, so subservient.' You need to really get in there and connect with another male. You can't think differently now; you're equal in the work-place and for *you* to be respected equally, you had to need to now socialise and get into the old boys' club. You have

to *do* that! And I started doing that (sighing during the sentence). I started doing that solely to build relationships outside of work. Yeah—getting to know what makes that person tick, understand? I’m not—I’ve never given too much attention to sport. You know, women are more into cricket, not so much into rugby and soccer. So I had to now make time to understand sports codes, what’s going—what’s happening. I listened to the news and I picked up important things so if it is a discussion, I can contribute. And they realise, ‘Oh, she knows a little bit,’ you know? It’s all about an *exclusionary* illusion. So you do those little development strategies—you had to come up with strategies to help yourself being part of the team [Usalia: lines 87-125].

Lastly, in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4), Tessens *et al.* (2011) argue that women leadership development needs include peer and supervisor support, and networking opportunities. Scholars such as Ducklin and Ozga (2007:639), Pande and Ford (2011:8), Priola (2007:37), Lumby and Azaola (2014:42), and Grant (2012:112) stress the importance of networking for aspirant women leaders in order to make connections with influential members of organisations and advance their own careers. For the first three years, Libby “got a lot of support and gained the respect of staff” [lines 155-156]. Ctjana received peer and supervisor support from her CEO that was invaluable throughout her career. He saw the worth in her and almost coerced her to apply for senior positions.

The right place at the right time. If I got the job at [name of school] that I’d applied for, I would still be post-level one, teaching accounting. I would never have gotten promotion there. In my situation, it was a male that saw the worth in me. If it wasn’t for [name of present CEO] I would never be here today. Because I was not going to apply—I didn’t think I could give them the time that they should expect me to give [Ctjana: lines 347-352].

None of the respondents alluded to the attendance of any high profile or industry networking opportunities. The two respondents who mentioned networking on inter-college level, rejected the notion due to bad experiences. Kdriana explained.

It was the [portfolio managers of the six colleges]—and I was the only woman there. It irritated me endlessly because I’m the chair person, I must prepare the agenda, I have to keep the minutes, / have to take everything down in writing. And I just decided, ‘Oh no, do you know what, it-it did not comfort me that they could provide

verbal input; people also have to do something.’ So it—when I withdrew from it, the whole thing just collapsed [Kdriana: lines 296-302, addendum F, 61].

Sindy tried to use the networking events for deputy CEOs that the Western Cape Education Department initiated as an opportunity to find answers for gender discrimination and regarded the group as a “sound board” [line 398], with peers whom she could trust. Unfortunately gossiping undermined the group and so, the networking “collapsed” [line 398]. She mentioned the names of two women who were regarded as remarkable role models in the sector and always provided peer and supervisor support but had never been promoted to principal positions.

I think my strategy was to make peace with it [gender discrimination—men-to-women and women-to-women]. I think the most important thing one should do, is get a sound board so that you know that you’re not alone in it. But the critical thing is to get a sound board that you can trust. Because like in the sector, for example, if you get the wrong sound board, like for example, the [women] deputies [of the six Western Cape colleges]—we used to meet quite regularly, like quarterly. Just to vent and—but [names of two deputies] speak out. Because [name of third deputy]—she’s got that same women thing, where she reports everything to her [name of CEO], because she’s like, ‘*Ja baas* [Yes, boss].’ You know like [name of CEO] is her god. You can see it in the way she talks and the way she reacts. Everything [...]. And remember [name of her CEO], promoted her, also aggressively. So, it’s probably—you live that god like mentality as a woman. So I would have probably be the same like that with [name of another previous CEO]. Yes, we would have done the same [if Sindy wasn’t promoted to another college]. So I think, that she [name of third deputy] *aanbid die man amper* [hero-worships the man almost]. So, she would go and tell everything over. [Name of the fourth women deputy CEO in the networking group] goes to tell [name of peer], so [name of peer] goes tell everything over to [name of CEO]. So *that* [deputy CEO meetings] collapsed. But I think it’s important to have a sound board, so that you can evaluate yourself. And to reflect. I think it’s good. I always remember, for me, the remarkable women in the sector that stood out, that would always play a pivotal role, positive pivotal role, would be people like [names of a women senior manager and a women deputy CEO around their sixties who never became CEOs]. They were from a personality type, from a work ethic type, from an emulation type—they would push you as a woman. It’s something that you would aspire to be. And I think we do need role models in the sector like that. That you can hook into. And that

is why I think I did grow. So, despite what is happening everywhere else—if you got women like that, that people can hook into, I think it does help a lot. So just like where you can go there and sat in to—and they have kind personalities. All the time. It’s a—I don’t know, but it does play a role. If you can do that [Sindy: lines 384-408].

From the above narrated experiences, it has become evident that most respondents struggled to deal with gender-related incidents. Examples of strategies to affect gender transformation like mentoring and attending training courses topped other strategies they shared with me. To follow the “silent strategy” [Uurona: line 154] and to “make peace” [Sindy: line 348 and Oenandi: line 752] with unpleasant gendered situations implied that some of the respondents surrendered rather than trying yet another strategy to deal with adverse gendered experiences. Secondly, the gendered experiences of women in leadership coerced them to apply different leadership processes, depending on the contexts, to assert themselves in their leadership positions. As part of the *resolution*, these processes and contexts will be analysed next.

#### **4.6.2. Leadership processes and contexts**

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.2) Pierce and Newstrom (2006:92) conceptualise the leadership process as a connection between context, leader, and follower—factors that influence the outcomes. In the example below, Kdriana proved that a male-dominated context would not necessarily produce an adverse outcome if the leader were a woman, like Pierce and Newstrom (2006:92) claimed. Also in Chapter 2 (see section 2.2.3), Eagly and Johnson (2006:108) pointed out that women might lose power if they portrayed feminine traits in male-dominated roles. Kdriana decided to prove men wrong whom she could see were stereotyping her. She enjoyed showing off in a typically male-dominated area and—in this *leadership process*, produced a positive outcome by demonstrating that her driving skills matched those of men.

Then I arrived at the recycling site with the truck, but it was—here’s a building and there’s a building [she gestured to the left and right]. The scrapyard was behind it. So the truck could not turn inside—it was not a huge one. Uhm, it had a broad container and could not turn. So it had to reverse all the way. But I grew up on a farm with a Bedford. You *know* you are competent! But there were men on that site—probably ten to twelve! And all ten or twelve thought they should now show me how to drive—in front and behind. No, they signalled in vain! And I ignored them, I looked in the mirror and when I saw that I was fine, almost through, I gunned that little truck



backwards with such a *woerrrr* [sic, meaning roar], you just saw men scattering in all directions [Kdriana: lines 193-200, addendum F, 62].

Although no respondent specifically referred to leadership approaches, processes and contexts, it was evident that they applied different leadership approaches, depending on the context and the followers, to find resolutions for gender discrimination. Kdriana decided to follow a *transactional* leadership approach (displaying contingent reward behaviour) when she asked two men to clean the campus. When she heard them complaining about her demands for hard work, she rewarded them with roast chicken and cooldrinks. In a different context, where Kdriana intended changing indolent staff behaviour, she favoured a *directive* or *autocratic* leadership approach, described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.3), where subordinates received instructions about what and how to perform tasks (Pande & Ford, 2011:23). For fourteen consecutive days, she chased the lazy staff from the staff room to their classes, “And, yes, it yielded results” [Kdriana: line 224, addendum F, 63].

*Transformational leadership* training equipped Usalia with intricate people skills—for instance, how to connect to people’s personalities and provide support, instead of managing tasks (Du Plessis, 2009:136-8). She narrated two examples (one man and one woman) of *autocratic leadership* approaches, tried to consciously learn from men-to-women and women-to-women discrimination and influence people’s thinking. She admitted that she once recognised herself in autocratic behaviour and realised that she preferred not to lead like that.

So I felt now, as I was going through it—just connecting with the different managers, understanding women as peers and above you—because I also reported to a [...] woman. She [a deputy principal] didn’t do anything to help another woman. Nothing, nothing, nothing. But what she did was to show you how *not* to be a woman in leadership. Everything she did, you actually looked at it and said, ‘No, I cannot reciprocate that behaviour. It’s not right. It’s not right.’ That other [male] manager that I spoke to you of and you know him being rude as well. Every time he did it, I reminded myself as a leader, ‘Don’t be like that.’ So you learn through all of that, you learn from the good examples and you take it as role models and you learn from the bad examples and say, ‘Never do that.’ So you really don’t. That grills you. So I found those strategies should be included. It’s very good. It doesn’t help you all the time, but I’ve also learnt how to influence people’s thinking. You have to learn who they



are and you have to understand how they do things, because all of us have a dominant brain—how we think. So we went through this leadership training that I spoke to you about and they did the brain profiling. And that brain profiling taught me so much about how to understand and influence above and below because if you don't understand the profile of your team that you're leading, you're also not gonna understand how to connect to their personalities and when you're working in a team, you're connecting to personalities and you're managing personalities. You're not managing tasks actually. So as a woman in leadership—and I constantly tell my women subordinates and peers in leadership, that 'Please, don't ever be a woman in a man's body, as a leader. Don't lead like a man. *Lead* like a woman, act like a woman. Don't be afraid that you think you're emotional, but look at the facts.' Because that's who we are. That's exactly our core. We are to nurture and it comes naturally to us and if we lose that, we are not gonna build societies, man. And I find a lot of women in leadership that just act task driven and I was there, I was there. I didn't care who you was and where you came from, you know, until I developed myself and I realised that if I connect to my core that—and I give from my core, then I'm gonna be better and I'm gonna feel more satisfied than just said [Usalia: lines 126-154].

Leaders portraying the *situational leadership* style could adapt to a changing organisational environment and understand their relationship with followers, including the nature of tasks to be performed (Silverthorne & Wang, 2001:400). Usalia decided to improve relationships as a strategy for combating gender discrimination in leadership.

And then I had to research on why [the males stop listening]. I had to do in depth understanding of, 'OK if I need to get a response, what am I doing wrong that I'm not getting the response I want?' But I didn't quite put my finger on it at that time. I realised I had to build relationships and trust. Relationships and showed them my competencies and my abilities and it is because of that, uhh, that *that* two gentleman that I reported to, really mentored me and developed me. Yeah, a real trust relationships was great. And it didn't have anything to do with uh race, gender. There were just—that relationship was built on integrity and trust between us. You know? And those were things that uhh, well obviously the CEO was, at that time, male and at that stage it was bridging that gap to see, 'OK, there is a person that we can trust.' And they [the men] were seen that even if I had discussions with them, although I'd seen them switching off at certain points, because they stopped listening to me, maybe we're talking too much, I don't know. Right? But uhh, there was that where

you could see genuine underst—wanting to understand—wanting to reason out a matter, you know? [Usalia: lines 51-64].

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.3), Mauthner and Edwards (2010:494) argue that power imbalances influence everyday transactions in institutions, which coerce women to revert to more authoritarian management styles, thus adopting different management styles. In the male-dominated space, Sindy battled to affirm herself and tried to build relationships, although she sometimes had to draw on aggression as a strategy, thus portraying a combination of the *autocratic* and the *contingent leadership* approach.

But in those male dominated areas, like with learnership 1000, which is across the board, you still have to deal with the *guys* [raised tone of voice]. They still—you know, what you say, doesn't matter. And you really had to *affirm* [raised tone of voice] yourself in the position. So as the departmental head [...], it took a lot of aggression, necessarily, to affirm—you know, that I'm in control, even though you've got fifty years of experience. Your fifty years don't—it counts in the areas that you've worked with, but not necessarily this new space. Uhm, so yes, I have to take the lead, but, it—it—uhm, it's for the growth of us both. So because the learnerships was a new domain, it was very difficult initially, trying to break through. Uhm, but I think it was, chipping, chipping, chipping, chipping away and-and breaking the stereotype and being able to say to the guys, 'Yes, I hear you—but have you considered this and this and this?' Because, particularly like, you know—I still remember with learnership 1000, I had to work with this one guy—a huge and crude man. So I—it's not like Cosby, you know? You know, Cosby is a refined—if you know the Cosby-type of person. He's very refined. Whereas this guy was as *grof* [unpolished] as they come. Uhm, they will tell the *appies* [apprenticeship students], you know, go to—, you know, with all the swearwords, *vloek-vloek-vloek-vloek-vloek-vloek* [curse-curse-curse-curse-curse-curse]. So that tied down the staff also. It was *vloek-vloek-vloek-vloek-vloek-vloek* [*ibid.*]. So, uhm—and then you get me, which is now totally the opposite, completely breaking the mould. And then come to find the middle-way. 'That's fine, *jy kan maar vloek* [you may swear], it's fine, I'm OK with that, but you still have to hear me. But you still have uhm—we still have a common purpose and now you get—and I get there. You must understand that we're in a partnership together.' And so *that* was difficult. That was very difficult. But for me, the way I got through with that, was to build the relationship. Maybe that's my personality, also. I get by by building the relationship [Sindy: lines 81-100].

Sindy narrated distinct experiences under three different leaders. She experienced the first women leader as “the motherly type” [line 107] which coincided with Lumby and Azaola's (2014:30,32) findings of a self-reported mothering leadership style by over 50% of a group of women leaders (See Chapter 2, section 2.2.3). Her second experience under a women leader was so negative that she decided to accept an appointment at another college instead of finding a solution to the women-to-women discrimination [line 235]. She described this women leader as “aggressive” and “rude” [line 135]. Sindy's third experience depicted an exceptional *transformational leader*—who, in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.2), had been defined as someone who transformed institutions by inspiring staff to rise above the ordinary, benefitting the group through charisma, enthusiasm, cognitive inspiration, and personal attention (Du Plessis, 2009:136-8). Sindy decided to emulate this leadership approach as a resolution for combatting gender discrimination.

My senior was a women at the time. Completely, completely, completely—and I think it's about personalities. If I look at when I worked with [name of senior] for example—her personality is very accommodating. So she would—she was the motherly type. So she would take on women in the department and groom them and support them and—but that was her nature. [Then] I had—[name of rude women senior] was my direct [...]. When I got to post-level five, I had to report to her directly. I can count on my one hand, in my reporting period, how many times I actually sat with her one-to-one, or had decent conversations, or uhm, where it was a grooming where we had a relationship. In hindsight, I can't—or her style was always just—she would, she would [swearword] you out. That's all. She was never uhm, her role wasn't—she wasn't there to groom you. You know? So I worked with these two women leaders and then worked with [name of previous male CEO], because we were reporting, almost indirectly, we were reporting to him and he loved—he would call you in and say, ‘OK, let's discuss this.’ And we used to talk about it. You know, I remember once, we made a—we did a project and uhm, in this project, we messed up. But it wasn't even my mess-up. It was really, it was an error. And the person, I just assumed this person would know how to do it [...]. Anyway, it was a [amount of money] mess-up. Oh my G— Almighty! So [name of CEO] said, ‘Ooh! How are we gonna fix this?’ That was his response. ‘How are we gonna fix this? So, let's talk about it and let's fix that.’ So, his approach—and that's why I'm saying it's—I remember all of these things about—how would [name of CEO] do that? You know? And-and, so you start to emulate that.

Not because of gender, because of maybe the type of person that you would aspire to be. It's about the personality [...]. So, from a, from a leadership perspective, [...] I didn't want people to know me as this and then I'm actually *this*. So, I wanted to make sure that in this role, I was me. I didn't want to lose *me* in the process. As a woman. Keeping in mind that you were working in this [male-dominated] domain. And again, we were trying to, we were trying a different approach. A softer approach. And it worked for us [Sindy: lines 79-143].

Ctjana, Dnelle, Kdriana, Sindy and Frieda provided me with a leadership context where they addressed gender discrimination from male colleagues. Ctjana was very serious about the respect and attitude of men towards women. Like Dnelle, who reprimanded a male colleague and told him to rather keep quiet [line 173], Ctjana addressed an issue of gender discrimination immediately, even if it was not “the proper time” [line 359].

The one thing that I can remember was [name of male colleague]—his attitude towards me. He would never have had that same attitude towards a man. But because I was a woman, never mind that I'm twenty years older than him, because I'm a woman, my opinion is not really of that—so much worth. And he used to—he's inclined to interrupt me, he contradicts me—and in front of people—and that's why I've decided, 'You don't do that to me.' I won't accept that. Now, I just told him, 'You don't talk to me like that again.' And, I'm—unfortunately, when it gets me, I don't wait for the proper time. I'd said it in front of other people. Unfortunately, I do that with [name of present CEO] too. So I am a bit—I get into a bit of trouble. But when I really get passionate about something, I can't wait to say it. I'm never rude. I always tell my kids and I've told my students, because I was such a naughty child, I've got a lot of time for my IT blokes. They're naughty. But I'm never disrespectful. That's one thing. So don't be disrespectful to me [Ctjana: lines 353-363].

Kdriana and Sindy recalled similar experiences of men who had addressed them disrespectfully, made nasty remarks or discriminated against them subtly. Kdriana recounted three “*oorloë*” [wars] [line 313] where she had been boxed in, and falsely accused. When she received flowers as an act of forgiveness, she was even more furious and saw it as patronising behaviour and said, “‘You just never bring me flowers again. But you also never repeat what you've done.’ And since then, we were great

friends” [Kdriana: lines 316-317, addendum F, 64]. Sindy walked away when she experienced bad attitudes from men, but she found it hard.

He would like, you know, he would like blow up and whatever and then—then I just walked back and say—because I don’t go into the attack. That’s not my personality. So then I would calm down first and then I’d say, [name of male subordinate]—when both of us are calm, said, ‘I didn’t appreciate the way you speak to me now. Let’s deal with that.’ And it was very difficult. It was very hard. [Sindy: lines 220-224].

In some situations, a heart-to-heart talk worked as resolution, but in other situations, it resulted in sarcasm. After a conversation with her CEO, Dnelle experienced remarks like “I cannot say something to this woman” [Dnelle: line 247, addendum F, 65]. Frieda confronted a rude male colleague who kept on bullying her. Fortunately, she was assertive enough to confront him directly. She used many different strategies—“a toolbox *vol vaardighede* [full of skills]” [line 216], to win the males over—tools such as attending workshops, acquiring skills, and refraining from becoming emotional.

He just always fought with me. Our offices were next to each other. And when I came in—he was rude to me, he didn’t give me a day of his time and then, one morning, I had just had enough. Then I walked to his office and I said, ‘Are we now, every day for the rest of our working hours, going to fight with each other when we see one another? Can’t we just treat each other professionally?’ And since then, I have to say, it went much better. But I also learnt you have to confront them directly. Confront directly. No-no, you don’t shoot with a hail-gun. Look, there’s another very interesting thing that they used to say. They told you to celebrate people’s performances. In a group. But if you reprimand, or if you have to sort out a problem with somebody, always one-to-one. Always. Someone reprimands, always one-to-one. So that’s part of your strategies. And I acquired a lot of tools over the years. I attended many courses. I attended “the six thinking hats” of Debono: lateral thinking, diversity management, change management. So I think that, for any manager and really not just women-/men manager, for any manager—you must make sure that you acquire as many skills as possible. You get like a toolbox of skills, so that—if you land up in difficult situations, you can try different things, do not get discouraged and do not become emotional. Look—and then the one that you should be aware of, is when you—when someone takes you on, you do not become emotional. For the men may, but the women may not. So I’ve always said, you count to ten, but you count to a thousand if you must [Frieda: lines 204-220, addendum F, 66].

The resolutions described in the penultimate section of Chapter 4, including strategies to deal with men-to-women and women-to-women gender discrimination, seemed to be problematic for many of the respondents. However, the remainder of the results of this study indicated that some progress has been made towards gender transformation in the TVET college sector during the past ten to 15 years. Kdriana, Frieda and Libby broke through the glass ceiling in their own colleges, which was probably more difficult than Pamela, Oenandi and Sindy who decided to move laterally or into a promotion post at another college. Only Uurona told me unequivocally that she never experienced gender discrimination when she applied for promotion posts, although she experienced fierce gender discrimination during executive management meetings. Uurona and Sindy mentioned that promotion was only available when “somebody dies” or after you have waited for “fifty years” before a promotion post became available. Three respondents, Oenandi, Ctjana and Uurona had become despondent and had indicated that they might consider leaving the sector shortly, which indicated that there is still room for improvement around gender transformation. Pamela also told me that she was tired and considered leaving the sector. Dnelle and Libby seemed to be the only two respondents who were comfortable in their positions and who did not describe many gendered-related incidents.

Having narrated the experiences of women in leadership in a plot structure with five elements, I will now provide a conclusion for Chapter 4.

## **4.7 CONCLUSION**

The aim of Chapter 4 was to interpret and narrate women leaders' experiences in their career journey within a specific plot structure, through weaving and threading the elements of the conceptual framework in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5, figure 2.1) in the bounds of the re-storied narrative. The data demonstrated that the experiences of respondents in this study could be linked to the elements in the conceptual framework, namely balance between the family roles and professional career, gender related notions and challenges, three stages in becoming a leader, leadership processes and contexts, and strategies and initiatives to deal with gendered experiences during their career as women leaders.

Furthermore, Chapter 3 (see section 3.3.2), identified five elements of the plot structure mentioned above, namely characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolutions (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002:330), as illustrated in the analytical framework (see figure 3.1).

Chapter 4 started with the *characters*. A biography of the ten respondents was provided without identifying them, focusing not only on leadership and gendered experiences, but also demographic influences, as the latter tended to shape and mould the *characters* of these aspiring women leaders. This was followed by an explanation of the *setting* – the TVET sector and respondents' individual circumstances, whereafter the *problem* was delineated. The rest of the chapter focused on *actions* – experiences about leadership and gender whilst learning, acquiring and performing leadership. Penultimately, strategies and initiatives, and leadership processes and contexts produced the *resolution* – how women leaders dealt with different situations. In this way, the narrative re-storying was concluded.

In the next chapter, a conclusion will be provided for the study in answer to the following research question: 'What do the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector?'



## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the final chapter of this narrative study, the outcomes from the theoretical perspective and the empirical section are synthesised by drawing several conclusions based on the findings and by aligning my perspectives from the studied literature to the empirical results. Firstly, I deal with the subsidiary questions by referring to the theoretical perspective, conceptual and analytical frameworks, and the data corpus. Secondly, the main research question is answered. Thereafter, possible implications for theory, policy, practice, and further research warrant attention before I finally conclude this study.

### **5.2 CONCLUSIONS AROUND THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

In this study, I set out to answer the question: What do the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector? (see Chapter 1, section 1.3). The interest in this topic was informed by the under-representation of women at leadership level at TVET colleges in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, despite legislative interventions and government mandates (see Chapter 1, section 1.2). A narrative methodology within the interpretivist paradigm was employed as I believed it was best positioned to give the ten purposively chosen respondents a “voice” (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002:329, 332) (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.1). The data corpus comprised digitally voice recorded in-depth interviews, which I personally transcribed verbatim and then proceeded to encode myself (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.6).

In Chapter 1, the status of gender transformation in higher education globally was reviewed, with the dearth of women in leadership roles seemingly similar all over the world. Also, new legislation pertaining to gender equity in South African public TVET colleges was highlighted (RSA, 2013:15). In 2014, the South African DHET Research Agenda (DHET, 2014:10) still described the higher education staff composition as “racially skewed, with white male academics dominating key areas” and stated that the management of TVET colleges should be transformed (*ibid.*). Thus, the



perspectives of women college leaders on the status of gender transformation at leadership level, add an important voice to gender transformation challenges to the benefit of decision-makers in higher education. I will now answer the three subsidiary questions next.

### **5.2.1. Respondents' experiences as leaders**

The *first subsidiary question* investigated what the respondents' general experiences in their roles as leaders in the TVET college sector in the Western Cape are. Their experiences were interpreted by means of a conceptual framework (see Chapter 2, section 2.5, figure 2.1), an example of what Walker (2013:106) calls a heuristic framework of career. I shared the respondents' experiences within the bounds of a structured narrative (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002:330) as illustrated in the analytical framework (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2, figure 3.1).

The narratives in Chapter 4 illustrated that gendered experiences of the respondents were closely aligned to the balance between their family roles and their professional careers in TVET. Demographic influences shaped and moulded the personalities of the respondents in dealing with adverse gendered experiences in their career paths, namely learning leadership, acquiring leadership, and performing leadership. Furthermore, as indicated by the analytical framework, gendered experiences could emerge at any of the three different phases of their career paths. Thus, all three stages were affected by gendered experiences towards leadership, including gender stereotyping and gender-related challenges. Respondents provided strategies and the application of various leadership approaches in different contexts as initiatives to deal with these gendered experiences. Older respondents struggled longer to reach top positions, while the younger respondents' careers were fast-tracked by gender transformation legislation or in some cases by supportive senior colleagues.

Respondents not only shared examples of men-to-women discrimination, but also women-to-women discrimination (McNae & Vali, 2015:294). Quotes such as "male chauvinist" [Ctjana: lines 156, 310, 370], men who ignored women in meetings—"you live invisible" [Usalia: line 318] or "he treated women like dirt" [Sindy: line 205], came up. Then again women-to-women discrimination coerced a respondent to quit because she could no longer work under "this rude, aggressive woman that needed to assert herself" [Sindy: line 135]. Envy among women prevented some from progressing in

their careers—“I’m tired of being hurt” [Oenandi: line 500] – a notion Van Zyl (2009:32) titled the PHD (pull-him/her-down) syndrome (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.3). Women who achieve higher ranks are often the victims of this syndrome. The narratives confirmed that gender discrimination is still thriving – sometimes disguised and sometimes less subtle, for instance Dnelle who had to convince the board that she could handle male staff prior to her CEO appointment [line 294].

### **5.2.2. How gender transformation affected respondents**

The *second subsidiary question* focused on how gender transformation (see Chapter 1, section 2.2.2) affected respondents in their career progression (if at all). This question was answered in an attempt to provide a contextualised interpretation of gender transformation (or the lack thereof) as experienced by the respondents themselves. Thus, special attention was given to the story of gender transformation in the respondents’ narratives to interpret and tell the over-arching story of their experiences of gender transformation (or the dearth thereof) in the TVET sector in the Western Cape. The results indicated that progress has been made towards gender transformation in this sector during the past ten to fifteen years, a finding that concurs with the studies of Dlamini (2013:171).

Regarding gender transformation around career progression, Kdriana, Frieda and Dnelle experienced the glass-ceiling syndrome (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.1) for a period, but eventually broke through. Kdriana, Frieda, Usalia and Libby’s promotions occurred in their own colleges, although Kdriana only got promoted after nine attempts [lines 36-37]. Dnelle, Sindy, Pamela, Oenandi and Uurona moved either laterally or into promotion at another college. Uurona told me unequivocally that she had never faced gender discrimination when applying for senior posts, although discrimination from her peers surfaced. Kdriana, Ctjana and Dnelle experienced more gender discrimination early in their careers, and could not obtain permanent posts if they were engaged to be married. Salaries were lower than that of their male counterparts and they had to resign when they fell pregnant. Uurona and Sindy mentioned that promotion was only available when “somebody dies” [Uurona: line 85] or after waiting for “fifty years” [Sindy: line 10]. Oenandi, Ctjana and Uurona became despondent and speculated that they might consider leaving the sector shortly, which indicated that there is still room for improvement around gender transformation. Pamela also told me that

she was tired and had considered leaving the sector. Dnelle, Kdriana and Libby seemed to be the only three respondents who were comfortable in their positions and who did not describe many gender-related incidents, although I sensed that they were quite guarded in their responses – conduct that Nisbett and Wilson (1977:252) call the “halo effect” where “likable” answers are given in their narratives. All in all, Libby, Pamela, Uurona, Usalia and Sindy’s careers had been fast-tracked either due to gender-transformation policies or men who saw potential in them and had head-hunted or groomed them for senior positions. Also, this tendency (of fast-tracking and head-hunting women) seemed to apply to the younger women, who were all women of colour, although this study did not focus on differentiating between age, race, culture or social class. Thus, these women had all been affected positively in their career progression due to gender transformation policies. However, it is impossible to make any generalisations with regard to a wider population due to the limited sample size of this study.

### **5.2.3. Strategies and initiatives respondents adopted to deal with gender-related issues**

The *third subsidiary question*, namely what strategies the respondents adopted to deal with gender-related issues, was partly answered in Chapter 2, section 2.4.4, when the *strategies* required by leading women in the workplace to reduce gender discrimination were explored. Secondly, the conceptual framework in Chapter 2, section 2.5, figure 2.1, indicated that gendered experiences of women in leadership coerced them to apply *initiatives* such as various leadership processes, depending on the context, to assert themselves in their leadership positions. The rest of this question was answered when the data corpus was interpreted and shared in Chapter 4, section 4.6.

Finding strategies and initiatives to deal with men-to-women and women-to-women discrimination at the leadership level in the TVET sector, seemed to be problematic for many of the respondents and they battled to provide me with evidence that they had successfully coped with destructive gendered experiences. Below I have distinguished between the strategies and the initiatives that *did* emerge from the data.

#### **5.2.3.1 Strategies**

No respondent shared evidence that work pressures and excessive workloads were addressed by restructuring roles according to workload, advised as a first strategy by

Tessens *et al.* (2011) in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4). Conversely, developing women through mentoring to contribute to their career progression (Doubell & Struwig, 2013:149), appeared to be a strategy that, although not applied deliberately, emerged in the stories of Sindy, Oenandi, Dnelle, Usalia, Libby and Pamela.

A second strategy described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4) was the utilisation of support structures. Besides supportive husbands and/or family support that Pamela, Frieda, Uurona, Libby, Kdriana, Dnelle, Oenandi, Ctjana and Usalia alluded to, no respondent stated that she had received any other support structures such as family-friendly policies, flexi-time, childcare facilities on site, and safety measures to eliminate potential sources of stress like hijacking after late meetings (Suraj-Narayan, 2005:88).

A third strategy stated in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4) was sensitising society towards gender transformation initiatives (Dlamini, 2013:155). Government had fast-tracked gender transformation through equity legislation (RSA, 2013:15), but that did not address subtle men-to-women and women-to-women discrimination that emerged in this study. No respondent shared incidents where society had been sensitised towards gender transformation initiatives. Libby encountered sexism, especially at engineering campuses, “amongst males across the board” [line 94], with no protective strategies in place. Subtle women-to-women discrimination made Oenandi’s worklife strenuous until she made peace with the inevitable. She used the word ‘peace’ twenty six times during her interview. Usalia’s strategy against subtle gender discrimination, such as peers and seniors withholding information from her, was to support and empower staff, although envy could be the reason why her seniors did not easily share their insights. Uurona spoke almost disrespectfully about male counterparts and subtle gender discrimination and had tried strategies such as mentoring, and a “mother-hen” [line 158] leadership approach, but to no avail. Finally, she had sensed so many adverse emotions that she had “shut up” [line 153] and applied the “silent strategy” [line 154]. Her advice had fallen on deaf ears and she had surrendered to protect herself.

Fourthly, from the theoretical perspective in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4), it became evident that training programmes and furthering your studies, could assist women with strategies against gender discrimination (Tessens *et al.*, 2011). In Chapter 4 (see section 4.5.1), Dnelle, Libby, Pamela, Usalia, Uurona, Frieda and Kdriana mentioned

that they had all benefitted from furthering their studies or attending ad hoc training courses to equip and protect themselves against gender discrimination.

A fifth strategy in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4), alluded to Tessens *et al.*'s (2011) argument that women leaders should be developed through peer and supervisor support and networking events. Libby “got a lot of support and gained the respect of staff” [lines 155-156]. Ctjana’s support from her CEO was invaluable. He almost coerced her into senior positions. Ducklin and Ozga (2007:639), Pande and Ford (2011:8), Priola (2007:37), Lumby and Azaola (2014:42), and Grant (2012:112), stress the importance of networking for aspirant women leaders in order to connect with influential members of organisations and advance their own careers. None of the respondents alluded to the attendance of any high profile or industry networking opportunities. The two respondents who mentioned networking at inter-college level, rejected the notion due to bad experiences. Sindy attended the networking events for deputy CEOs initiated by the Western Cape Education Department as an opportunity to find answers to gender discrimination and regarded the group as a “sound board” [line 398] with peers whom she could trust. Unfortunately, gossiping undermined the group and so the networking “collapsed” [line 398]. She mentioned the names of two women whom she regarded as remarkable role models in the sector often providing peer and supervisor support, but who had never been promoted to principal positions.

Limited *strategies* emerged from the data. The respondents’ feelings of defeat revealed that many men and women still get away with subtle gender discriminatory behaviour and that gender transformation could not simply be quantified in terms of equity only. Also, as leadership approaches and management styles were analysed as possible *initiatives* to reduce adverse gendered experiences, initiatives are discussed next.

### **5.2.3.2 Initiatives**

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.2) Pierce and Newstrom (2006:92) conceptualise the leadership process as a link between context, leader, and follower—factors influencing the outcomes. The analytical framework in Chapter 3 (see section 3.3.2) indicates that a second resolution or *initiative* to reduce adverse gendered experiences is to use different leadership approaches depending on the context and follower. Also, in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.3), Mauthner and Edwards (2010:494) argue that power imbalances influence everyday transactions in institutions, which coerce women to

revert to more authoritarian management styles. This was confirmed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.6.2) where Sindy battled to affirm herself in a male-dominated space and tried to build relationships, but eventually reverted to aggression as a strategy, thus portraying a combination of the *autocratic* and the *contingent leadership* approach. Conversely, she also identified herself with another women leader, whom she depicted as “the motherly type” [line 107], which coincides with Lumby and Azaola's (2014:30, 32) finding of a self-reported mothering leadership style by over 50% of a group of women leaders (See Chapter 2, section 2.2.3).

Chapter 4 yielded evidence of the respondents' attempts to apply different leadership approaches, depending on the context and followers, to find resolutions for gender discrimination. Kdriana decided to follow a *transactional* leadership approach (displaying contingent reward behaviour) when she asked two men to clean the campus. When they became despondent, she offered them refreshments and “*da' gaat hulle weer lank aan* [and that got them going again for a long time]” [line 192]. Depending on the context, respondents demonstrated leadership approaches such as, amongst others, a *directive* or *autocratic* leadership approach and a *situational leadership* approach. Sindy depicted her previous male CEO as an exceptional *transformational* leader, a leadership type which had been defined as someone who transformed institutions by inspiring staff to rise above the ordinary, benefitting the group through charisma, enthusiasm, cognitive inspiration, and personal attention (Du Plessis, 2009:136-8) in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.2). She decided to emulate this leadership style as a resolution to combat gender discrimination. With the subsidiary questions answered, I can now answer the main research question.

#### **5.2.4. Gender transformation in the Western Cape TVET sector: a narrative response**

In this study, the *main research question*, namely what the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector, was partly answered through the three subsidiary questions. Furthermore, creative scaffolding (Frick, 2010:17) provides a conceptual framework for this study within which respondents' gendered experiences during their TVET college careers are first interpreted by means of initial coding, in vivo coding, descriptive coding, and colour coding or themeing the data,

also called “piori” or prefigured” coding (Creswell, 2007:152) (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.2). Secondly the narratives of women leaders’ experiences are construed and re-storied within the bounds of a specific plot structure as illustrated in the analytical framework, yielding an answer to the rest of the main research question.

The first and second subsidiary questions allude to the women leader’s gender transformation experiences and how gender transformation affected them. Firstly, the career pathways (see Chapter 4, section 4.5) revealed that the older women leaders experienced progressive gender transformation in terms of promotion, although late in their careers (see section 5.2.1). In contrast, those respondents who were ten to twenty years younger than the older leaders, progressed quickly (see section 5.2.2). Then there were women across the board, who struggled to achieve promotion due to subtle women-to-women discrimination (see section 5.2.1) and various other reasons (see sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2), despite gender transformation legislation. Furthermore, the study revealed that challenges restricting career progression, caused some of the respondents to abandon their ambition by the performance phase of the career pathway as in “I can’t do it anymore” [Ctjana: line 159].

Secondly, despite gender transformation legislation, the answers to subsidiary questions 1 and 2 reveal that most of the women leaders worked much harder than the men to “prove” (see Chapter 4, section 4.5.2 and section 4.6.1) themselves and/or to compete for senior positions, so much so that most of the respondents complained about various health problems (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2). In Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3) Karanika-Murray *et al.* (2015:63) confirm this adverse health impact by stating that women leaders’ workload could result in burn-out or ‘worn-out’.

Gender transformation in terms of gender discrimination, stereotyping, and barriers respondents faced, depicts a bleaker scenario than career progression. Gender transformation legislation did not equip respondents with strategies to deal with gender discrimination. In the third subsidiary question, it struck me that respondents struggled to produce evidence of these strategies. “Hard work” as a strategy cropped up more than once as a strategy in itself (see Chapter 4, section 4.5.2), but despite various concepts proposed as strategies to effect gender transformation in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.4), the respondents provided insufficient evidence to confirm that women leaders have enough resolutions to equip them for gender discrimination.



The answers to the three subsidiary questions help us to understand that some progress has been made regarding gender transformation around career progression of women leaders in the Western Cape vocational context during the past ten to 15 years. The changing social context that is underway as a result of equity legislation, has, in fact, enabled women, such as those in this study, to move beyond the patriarchal constraints that have subjected women to subordinate status to take up positions of leadership. Conversely, the insufficient progress in gender transformation in terms of gender stereotyping, (men-to-women and women-to-women) discrimination and other gender-related challenges, is disturbing and causes some women to abandon their ambition by the performing leadership phase. This scenario, where competent, potential women leaders surrender and/or even leave the sector, further compounds the under-representation of women amongst the pool of aspiring college principals, although the sample size in this study precludes any claim that my conclusions refer to all women in leadership roles in TVET. Furthermore, I self-consciously selected stories, but “narrative smoothing” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:10) could have happened. Thus I urge the readers to apply their minds to the untold stories or “narrative secrets” too (*ibid.*). Moreover, this study does not have a “Hollywood plot” (*ibid.*) – a specific danger in narrative, where all is well in the end. The implications of the answers to the research questions are discussed further in the next section below.

### **5.3 POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS**

In this study, the narrated gendered experiences of women leaders in vocational education in the Western Cape provided a number of contributions in terms of theory, policy, practice, and further research to the body of knowledge on gender transformation at the executive level of colleges. I start with the theoretical contributions.

#### **5.3.1. Theory**

Firstly, this study fills a gap in theoretical knowledge about the gender transformation experiences of women in vocational leadership roles in a particular context during their career journeys. Dlamini (2013:1) found that in-depth studies of South African women leaders’ life stories are limited. Hence, this study is one of the first narrative studies



about gender transformation experiences of women vocational education leaders in South Africa and gives these women a voice, providing a richer source of information than is possible through statistical means only.

Secondly, the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2 (see section 2.5) can be used as a theoretical tool by scholars in the field of leadership in general and/or in the field of gender transformation in particular. The conceptual framework also provides theoretical guidelines on how to apply gendered experiences of women in TVET leadership in further studies.

Thirdly, the analytical framework developed in Chapter 3 (see section 3.3.2) can be used in narrative studies to illustrate how the most suitable interpreted data is placed in a narrative context, yielding re-storying by applying a problem-solution approach, where the data corpus is also analysed for five elements of plot structure.

Lastly, this study could be used to modify or extend other related leadership studies for instance Moorosi's (2010:560) and Acker's (2012:423) theoretical understanding of a strategically-planned career route that sheds light on various complexities that potential leaders encounter on their way to top positions. Thus, highlighting how women's ambition to advance in their careers has been supported or disrupted, by relating challenges and support strategies in terms of gender-related issues of my study to the chronological phases of potential women leaders' career paths may enrich the existing body of knowledge. Next, I discuss possible implications in terms of policy.

### **5.3.2. Policy**

In 2013, the national and international focus on gender equity and redress has also permeated the policy realm in South Africa. The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (B 50B of 2013) states that 50% of those in decision-making structures should be women (RSA, 2013:15) to comply with international commitments. Notwithstanding legislation and policy initiatives regarding gender equality, Leathwood (2011:30) notes that the number of women in educational leadership positions in various countries does not increase in accordance with these policies. The respondents' perspectives in my study indicate that TVET colleges in the Western Cape do pay attention to gender transformation legislation, although the progression is slow. There is an equal number of men and women TVET college principals since October

2015, but at deputy principal level, women (also under investigation in this study) are still under-represented, although this may be equalled out at the moment by adding (subordinate) women senior managers, academic managers, campus managers, and portfolio managers to the equation, bringing the average to more or less 50% men and women at leadership level.

Then again, my study reveals that there is room for improvement regarding gender transformation in terms of gender discrimination, related challenges, and stereotyping at leadership level. Policy-developers and decision-makers seeking to reduce gender discrimination and stereotyping among potential college leaders, could formulate interventions to inform, sensitise, empower and transform male and women leaders at key stages of their career pathways, incorporating strategies identified in this study. Another possible implication of this study refers to implications for the workplace, thus practice is discussed next.

### **5.3.3. Practice**

The Director-General: DHET showed a particular interest in this study. “The topic of your research is of great interest to the Department. It will therefore be appreciated if you could share the findings of your research with the Department upon completion of your research” (Qonde, 2015:2).

In terms of leadership training, Robertson (2015:208) affirms that South African public TVET colleges will only transform through “strong and capable leadership”. My study yielded limited data in terms of resolutions for reducing gender discrimination and related challenges. However, there is enough evidence in the data that all the respondents work hard to prove themselves. Furthermore, they preferred to share hard work as a resolution in itself. These two findings indicate that there might be a need in the sector to capacitate leaders to deal with these issues by implementing an all-inclusive gender transformation strategy. This strategy could form part of diversity management listed under topic three (Management Skills) of Robertson’s (2015:213) leadership curriculum framework model and be used as guidelines to capacitate leaders.

Secondly, the study gives insights into women leaders’ social construction of experiences that relate to gender transformation in vocational education. Squire *et al.* (2008:10) highlight the centrality of researchers’ interpretations of respondents’

narrative experiences as part of understanding transformation: “Transformation – meaning, not always, but frequently, improvement – is also assumed to be integral to narrative: in the story itself; in the lives of those telling it; even in researchers' own understandings of it.” This study did not aim to bring about gender transformation in the TVET sector through the study itself, but rather provided a contextualised interpretation of gender transformation (or the lack thereof) as experienced by the respondents themselves and formed a key consideration given the context of this study as discussed in Chapter 1 (see section 1.2). These insights provide more inferences for practice as indicated below.

For TVET college principals and college councils who seek to advance diversity management within their own leadership teams, this study offers a starting point in the development of in-house strategies to support and capacitate ambitious and potential women leaders. “Without leadership development, capable leaders will remain the ideal and will not become the reality” (Robertson (2015:208).

For HR practitioners in TVET colleges this study might assist in implementing a multi-faceted transformation strategy to empower ambitious women and enlarge the pool of potential leaders. According to Walker (2013:229), interventions of this nature offered in the workplace may help to sustain the ambitions of potential women leaders, “thereby reducing the attrition rate amongst this under-represented cohort within college senior leadership” (*ibid.*).

For mentorship practitioners, the study offers strategies and initiatives as guidelines for women leaders in dealing with gender-related issues more effectively, including, among others, peer and supervisor support, sustained self-belief and other related training, domestic and family support, and networking opportunities (Tessens *et al.*, 2011; Lumby & Azaola, 2014:42). Having dealt with possible implications for practice, the need for further research proposals is addressed next.

#### **5.3.4. Further research**

Several possibilities in terms of further studies came to mind while I was busy collecting and interpreting the data. TVET colleges' women leaders in the Western Cape might have provided me with different perspectives to those in the rest of the country due to various reasons, including amongst others, socio-economic, cultural,

racial and political differences (Dlamini, 2013:187). My sample size was small and restricted to the Western Cape Province only. The respondents hardly included portfolio and senior managers – where I was also ranked at the time of the study, thus knowing that gender-related challenges were even more pronounced at these levels than at executive management levels. I also wondered about men's gendered experiences across race and gender divides whilst doing the study. However, I had to narrow down my ideas and for the purpose of this study, I came up with the following recommendations for further research:

- 5.3.4.1 A study identifying the mechanisms that create gender discrimination in the South African TVET sector and that offer alternatives to sensitise, inform and transform society – a gender transformation initiative that Risman (2004:447) and Dlamini (2013:155) echo in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.4).
- 5.3.4.2 A study of the gendered experiences of middle and senior managers in TVET colleges in the Western Cape Province. The study could include an intersectional analysis of culture, race, class, disability and generation as the sample size of my study was too small to differentiate among any of the above variables.
- 5.3.4.3 A similar study that is not restricted to the Western Cape only, but include women leaders in TVET colleges nationally. Such a study could also differentiate between principals, vice-principals, campus managers and academic heads.
- 5.3.4.4 A study that investigates the role of male leaders and partners who have empowered women on their college career pathways.

## **5.4 LIMITATIONS**

I believe my biggest limitation in this particular study was my insider status. This is one of the factors that prevented me from using respondents at the college where I was employed at the time of the study, depriving this study of additional rich input. Furthermore, having gained in-depth knowledge of the sector over a period of 30 years, it provided me with a great deal of insight, but due to concerns about bias, I needed to be careful about staying true to the data.

Because of my insider status, I could easily access more than enough respondents for a narrative study, but in conversations about my research topic, I received and had to turn down additional interviewee offers from my own college staff who also wanted to share their stories. Due to the limited nature of the study, as well as time and travelling constraints, I conducted only one interview per respondent, thus forfeiting some detail, for example, in-depth demographic information. Seidman (2006:17) cautions against “treading on thin contextual ice” when only one interview is conducted. Thus, I adhered to narrative interview protocol by keeping prompts to the minimum during the interview (see Chapter 3, section 3.3.1) and did not cut interviews short when they lasted longer than the envisaged 60 to 90 minutes. On the positive side, most respondents were so keen to share their stories with me, that there was neither a need to prompt them during their interviews, nor were there awkward silences. For example, a fieldnote of my experience with one of the respondents reads:

When I switched on the voice recorder, she took it very gently and put it down right in front of her – this respondent was well aware that she only had one opportunity to share her story and wanted to make sure that everything she says, is distinct, clear and audible enough. She talked for exactly two hours. Non-stop. I did not have the heart to cut the conversation short, regardless of the fact that I knew how long it would take me to transcribe this interview. Afterwards, she showed great appreciation and told me how she enjoyed it to voice her experiences through such rigorous and deep reflective thinking – something she has not done for a long time (Field notes, 10 February 2016).

Many of the respondents’ stories resonated with my own and I really found it difficult to refrain from starting conversations with my respondents during their interviews.

For the past two years and eight months, I took on a long and hard, but extremely fulfilling, journey to engage in part-time studies while working full-time at one of the biggest TVET colleges in the country, managing a demanding portfolio in a department with 12 staff members. I tried to work on my study every day – even if it was just for ten minutes, reading a journal article while standing in a queue. In addition, I last studied almost 35 years ago. Through deep reflection, I developed a fuller appreciation of the complexities and difficulties of change, of transformation. Transformation is integral to narrative: in the story itself; in the lives of those telling it; and in my own understanding of transformation (Squire *et al.*, 2008:14).

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

This study sought to provide an insider perspective on the shared experiences of women in leadership with specific reference to gender transformation through a narrative methodology by interpreting the ten respondents' lived and told stories. These stories yielded a data corpus with a number of "buried treasures" (Saldana, 2013:259), adding further depth to the conclusions.

Regarding the broader significance of this narrative study, there is still a great deal to be done based on gender transformation interventions to inform, sensitise, empower and transform men and women leaders at key stages of their career pathways. Behind the reported narratives are the untold stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990:10), and much scope for further research. This study therefore only serves as a point of departure in addressing all-inclusive gender transformation to the advantage of women and men in TVET college leadership.

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## ADDENDUM A

### CONSENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING



**higher education  
& training**

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X174, PRETORIA, 0001, 123 Francis Baard Street, PRETORIA, 0002, South Africa  
Tel: (012) 312 5911, Fax: (012) 321 6770  
Private Bag X9192, CAPE TOWN, 8000, 103 Plein Street, CAPE TOWN, 8001, South Africa  
Tel: (021) 469 5175, Fax: (021) 461 4761

**Enquiries: Renay Pillay**

**Email: [Pillay.r@dhet.gov.za](mailto:Pillay.r@dhet.gov.za)**

**Telephone: 012 312 6191**

Mrs René Bonzet  
PO Box 15606  
Welgelegen  
CAPE TOWN  
7506

By e-mail: [rbonzet@gmail.com](mailto:rbonzet@gmail.com)  
[rbonzet@northlink.co.za](mailto:rbonzet@northlink.co.za)

Dear Mrs Bonzet

#### REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN FIVE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES IN THE WESTERN CAPE: EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN WESTERN CAPE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES THROUGH A NARRATIVE APPROACH

I acknowledge receipt of your request for permission to conduct research in five (5) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western on the topic "Exploring the experiences of women in leadership positions in Western Cape Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges through a narrative approach".

Your request has been evaluated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for permission to undertake the above research has been granted. You are advised to obtain further permission from the Principals of the five (5) TVET Colleges before commencing any research activities.

The five (5) TVET Colleges are:

- a) Boland TVET College;
- b) College of Cape Town;
- c) False Bay TVET College;
- d) South Cape TVET College; and
- e) West Coast TVET College.

You are also requested to attach the following documents to correspondence addressed to the Principals of the five (5) TVET Colleges:

- a) copy of this letter from the DHET;
- b) copy of the "Ethical Clearance" letter issued by Stellenbosch University; and
- c) copy of the "completed application form to undertake research in public colleges".

The topic of your research is of great interest to the Department. It will therefore be appreciated if you could share the findings of your research with the Department upon completion of your research.

I wish you all of the best in your research study.

Yours sincerely



*pp* **Mr GF Qonde**  
**Director-General**

**Date:** 29/10/2015



## ADDENDUM B

### CONSENT FROM TVET COLLEGE PRINCIPALS

#### TO CONDUCT NARRATIVE STUDY INTERVIEWS DURING 2015/6

NO.	ASPECT	CONTENTS
A	CONTACT DETAIL OF PARTICIPATING TVET COLLEGE	<p><b>NAME OF COLLEGE</b></p> <p><b>POSTAL ADDRESS</b></p> <p><b>EMAIL ADDRESS</b></p> <p><b>TELEPHONE NUMBER:</b></p>
B	<b>TOPIC</b> Exploring the experiences of women in leadership positions in Western Cape Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges through a narrative approach	I understand that this research attempts to compile an interpretative study which describes the experiences of women in leadership positions in Western Cape Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges through a narrative approach.
C	<b>USE OF OBTAINED INFORMATION</b>	<p>I also understand that the information gathered from this study will be used to potentially contribute to the field of knowledge and the extension of the conceptual understanding regarding the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape with special reference to gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector. The following key factors will also be taken into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents' general experiences in their roles as leaders in the WC TVET sector</li> <li>• The effect of gender transformation on respondents' career progression (if at all)</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopted strategies of respondents to deal with gender-related issues</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<b>INTERVIEWS WITH SENIOR WOMEN MEMBERS OF STAFF</b>	I understand that the identified staff members of my institution will be interviewed and that the information gathered from the interviews will be verbatim transcribed, analysed and summarised as findings.
<b>E</b>	<b>GUARANTEEING PRIVACY</b>	The voice recordings and transcriptions thereof will remain confidential and be stored in a safe place. The researcher will ensure that no personal information about any participant will be revealed. After completion of the study, all raw data will be deleted, because voice recordings can be identified.
<b>F</b>	<b>RIGHTS OF PARTICIPANT</b>	The name of the participating institution will be listed as number 1-5 as respondents in the interviews. I understand that my institution will not be identified in any manner as to viewpoints expressed in any paper or report that may be produced from the research.
<b>G</b>	<b>CONTACT PERSON</b>	If I have any questions about my rights as an institutional study participant, or I am dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of the study process, I may contact Mrs R Bonzet (RESEARCHER) at Northlink College TEL: 021-9709046 or 0833038567 or Dr Liezel Frick (SUPERVISOR) at Stellenbosch University TEL: 021-8083807.
<b>H</b>	<b>AGREEMENT</b>	I agree that my institution may participate in this study. I also agree that respondents at my institution may be interviewed.
<b>I</b>	<b>SIGNATURE OF CONSENT</b>	<b>SURNAME:</b>  <b>FULL NAME/S:</b>  <b>SIGNATURE: .....</b> <b>PRINCIPAL</b>  <b>DATE:</b> .....

## ADDENDUM C

### ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

#### Approval Notice New Application

22-Sep-2015  
Bonnet, Ren? R

Proposal #: SU-HSD-000675

Title: Exploring the experiences of women in leadership positions in Western Cape Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges through a narrative approach

Dear Mrs Ren? Bonnet,

Your New Application received on 02-Sep-2015, was reviewed  
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: 22-Sep-2015 -21-Sep-2016

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your proposal number (SU-HSD-000675) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

#### Included Documents:

DESC Report  
REC: Humanities New Application

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham  
REC Coordinator  
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

## ADDENDUM D

### EXAMPLE OF RESPONDENT CONSENT LETTER



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
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#### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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Exploring the experiences of women in leadership positions in Western Cape Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges through a narrative approach – Participating staff member consent from TVET college women leaders in the Western Cape

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by René Bonzet, MPhil (LLL) student, from the Department of Curriculum Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results will be contributed to a 50% thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a successful women leader in your own college.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the experiences of women currently in leadership positions in the Western Cape public college sector through a narrative approach. Special attention will be given to the story of gender transformation in the respondents' narratives to interpret and tell the overarching story of their experiences of gender transformation (or the dearth thereof) in the TVET sector.

#### 2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- 1.1 Prior to beginning the interview, I will ask you to sign this consent form.
- 1.2 One interview session, which should take about ninety minutes of your time, at a time and place convenient to you, will be set up with you. An audio tape will be used to capture the interview and notes will be taken.
- 1.3 A follow-up one-on-one feedback session will be conducted to get your input on the initial report.
- 1.4 If the need arises, I shall contact you telephonically to clarify uncertainties, at a time convenient to you.
- 1.5 I will be providing you with a copy of the final report, however, data will be combined such that individuals cannot be identified. In my report I will be quoting, on an anonymous basis, individual comments with your permission.

#### 3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Although I don't foresee any reasonable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences, I shall omit anything you said which you feel uncomfortable with, from my findings and report. On your request, I shall

also stop the voice recording immediately. If, for any unforeseen reason, the study is terminated, I shall inform you straightaway and destroy all field data.

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

The information gathered from this study will be used to potentially contribute to the field of knowledge and the extension of the conceptual understanding regarding the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape with special reference to gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector. The following key factors will also be taken into consideration:

- 1.1 Respondents' general experiences in their roles as leaders in the WC TVET sector
- 1.2 The effect of gender transformation on respondents' career progression (if at all)
- 1.3 Adopted strategies of respondents to deal with gender-related issues

#### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The College or participating staff member will not receive any remuneration or payment for taking part in this study.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of password protection on the voice recordings and computer. You will have the right to review/edit the tapes and no one else will have access to the data, except myself and Dr Liezel Frick, the supervisor for this study. Your voice recordings will not be used for educational purposes, and will be erased once the study has been completed. The name of the participating college will be listed as number 1-5 and the participating staff member as respondents in the interviews. You or your college will not be identified in any manner as to viewpoints expressed in any paper, report or publication that may be produced from the research.

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in the study or not. If you volunteer to be in the study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Mrs René Bonzet (principal investigator) at Northlink College TEL: 021-9709046 or 0833038567, or Dr Liezel Frick (supervisor) at Stellenbosch University TEL: 021-8083807.

#### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>
--

The information above was describe to me \_\_\_\_\_ by René Bonzet in Afrikaans/English and I am in command of this language/it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

*[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study / I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.]* I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

<b>SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR</b>
----------------------------------

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## ADDENDUM E

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The problem investigated in this study pertained to the under-representation of women at leadership level in TVET colleges, particularly in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Against this background the research question was therefore:

*What do the narratives of women currently in leadership positions in TVET colleges in the Western Cape tell us about gender transformation (or the lack thereof) in this sector?*

The subsidiary questions were:

- 1) Regarding gender transformation: Tell me about your experiences in general, in your role as a leader in the TVET college sector in the Western Cape;
- 2) How did gender transformation affect you in your career progression (if at all)? and
- 3) What strategies did you adopt to deal with gender-related issues?

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

RESPONDENT	DAY	DATE	TIME
Libby	Thursday	4 February 2016	16:30 – 17:30
Usalia	Friday	5 February 2016	09:00 – 10:30
Oenandi	Wednesday	10 February 2016	16:30 – 18:30
Sindy	Thursday	11 February 2016	07:30 – 08:45
Ctjana	Friday	19 February 2016	10:00 – 11:05
Frieda	Thursday	26 February 2016	10:30 – 11:45
Kdriana	Thursday	26 February 2016	17:00 – 18:20
Uurona	Thursday	3 March 2016	18:00 – 19:00
Dnelle	Thursday	24 March 2016	09:00 – 10:15
Pamela	Wednesday	30 March 2016	10:00 – 11:15

:

## ADDENDUM F

### ORIGINAL AFRIKAANS TRANSCRIPTS OF RESPONDENTS' QUOTES AS USED IN THE THESIS TEXT

1. miskien 'n gender ding.
2. Ek het absoluut floreer in hierdie non-entiteit.
3. Ek wil die meester wees van wat ek doen.
4. want daai 77 eposse in die dag, is dan nou vanaand se werk.
5. Ek dra hierdie drie hoede.
6. die bekwame, maar onwillige leier.
7. Ek het letterlik elke vyf jaar—ja, dan's ek uitgekuier. As ek daai plafon bereik, dan het ek uitgekyk na iets anders, maar dit is baie keer, uhm, sommer 'n gelyke skuif. Net om 'n nuwe uitdaging te ervaar.
8. Dit was 'n—uhm, die-die eerste oggend wat die klok gelui het, sit ek in daai kantoor en daar's geen beweging nie. Geen student wend 'n poging aan om klas toe te gaan nie. En ek storm daar uit, en ek begin skel op hulle. "Why are you not in your classes?" "No but the teacher has not unlocked yet" [stygende stemtoon]. En ek storm in die personeelkamer in en dieselfde prentjie, drink koffie en wat ookal. "Goeiemôre, kan julle asseblief onmiddellik klasse toe gaan?" Ek het dit volgehou vir veertien dae. Elke dag. Elke dag. En die verskil na veertien dae is, as ek by daai voordeur uitkom, dan skarrel hulle. Die personeel het feitlik onmiddellik gereageer en hulle het nou afskeid geneem van hulle oggendkoffie en gesorg dat hulle in die klasse is, en die studente het agtergekom hierdie [...] heks—kry haar net af van my af. As sy uitkom, dan skarrel ons nou maar klasse toe. Dis 'n beter opsie. En ja, dit het vrugte afgewerp.
9. want jy kon nie 'n permanente aanstelling kry as jy verloof is nie.
10. En as jy swanger raak, moes jy bedank.
11. Die einste kermkous het presies dieselfde kwalifikasies as ek gehad, en dieselfde werk gedoen. Ek het net baie meer periodes gehad as hy. Maar hy het meer verdien as ek.
12. Kyk, ek moet vir jou sê, deur die jare het ek vir nege poste by [naam van kollege] aansoek gedoen.
13. Toe kom daar 'n posvlak drie pos. Dis nou vir jou 'n gender-storie. Toe ek dit [die aansoek] vir daai tyd se waarnemende hoof gaan gee, toe's hy geskok dat ek aansoek doen daarvoor, want dis vir persoon so-en-so belowe. Ag weet jy, en ek het besluit dis nie die moeite werd om-om 'n dispuut te verklaar nie. En die—nee, ek is nie genooi vir 'n onderhoud nie. Nee maar weet jy wat, almal daai—daai drie wat die posvlak twee bo my gekry het, en daai een wat die posvlak drie bo my gekry het—ek



was lank voor hulle—die oormerkery het nie vir my saakgemaak nie. Ek was vies (stemtoon gaan op). But I went back and I did my thing. En ek was later posvlak vyf bo hulle. Die mens wik, maar God beskik. Dit was nog altyd my filosofie. En so het dit geakkumuleer tot die neënde pos waarvoor ek aansoek gedoen het. Dit was die vise-prinsipaal [pos]. En dit was suksesvol.

14. Nou dink ek, ek wil dit nie aan myself doen nie.

15. So ek het maar altyd hierdie dryfkrag gehad om te presteer. Die biblioteek se boeke deurgelees as ek begin by 'n nuwe skool, en van standerd drie af het ek kinderkrans gegee by die kerk. Ek was een van die juffrouens by die kerk. En ek was prefek in standerd nege en hoofdogter in matriek. En ek was in standerd vier en vyf—in die skool was ek die padpatrollieleier. En ook kaptein van die korfbalspan, en so aan. So dis vir my lekker. Dis vir my lekker om te leer. Dis vir my lekker om nuwe goed uit te vind, en so aan. So, ek was geneig, van kleins af, om altyd leiding te neem. Selfs met grootmense partykeer. As ek voel hulle kry nie goed reg nie, het ek sommer gevra, “kan ons nie maar net so maak nie—doen nie?” [glimlag].

16. Ek het altyd issues gehad met seuns. Van kleins af. Ek het hulle bloedneus geslaan as hulle met my gesukkel het. Ek het nie my mond vir hulle gehou nie. Daar was 'n baie snaakse insident in my sub A jaar, waar die seuns my geterg het en my gejaag het, en toe hardloop ek in die fietsloods se paal vas en ek het so twee weke uit die skool uit gebly. My hele neus is omtrent gebreek in die proses. Maar in elk geval, dit was baie snaaks. Maar die meeste van die tyd het ek my man gestaan teen hulle. My oudste suster wou my nie saam skool toe vat nie, want sy't geweet ek bly nie stil vir seuns nie.

17. So hulle kon nie verstaan as jy—as my ma-hulle byvoorbeeld, jy weet, vir ons sekere goed laat doen het nie. Dit was vir hulle net—dit het hulle verstand te bowe gegaan dat dogters sulke rigtings kan ingaan, of kan doen, of so aan. So, en ons is—van kleins af het ons om die tafel gesit in die aand. Dit was altyd ons geselstyd. En hulle [haar ouers] het altyd al jou vrae beantwoord so goed soos wat hulle kon. En in die aand was ons geselstyd en het ons as 'n gesin goed bespreek.

18. [D]ie een ding wat my ma-hulle ons van kleinsaf geleer het—ek meen, dit was in die apartheidsera—was respek vir ander mense. Dit het ons van kleinsaf geleer. Dit het nie saak gemaak wie met jou praat, en met wie jy praat nie, jy respekteer ander mense vir wie hulle is.

19. Ek vind dat sommige mans nie ontvanklik is vir nuwe idees nie en dis hoekom—toe verstaan ek—toe weet ek nou presies hoekom sukkel ek altyd om inkoop te kry.

20. [E]k [het] deur die nag gewerk. Soms het ek twee of drie nagte nie geslaap nie. Vir ses jaar het ek gemiddeld twee ure 'n nag geslaap. En toe slaan die Cocksackievirus my. Dit het my so ses maande gevat om weer op my energie level te kom. Nou is ek fine. Ek het hope energie. Maar ek werk hard. Ek werk twaalf ure 'n dag. Ek sit nog steeds dieselfde energie in my werk in.

21. Ons het kort-kort gaan vakansie hou. Jy weet, so al hierdie goed het ek gedoen, tussen-in.

22. Ek voel net dat ek dit wat ek geleer het deur my loopbaan, met mense nou moet deel. Deel die kennis, deel die ervaring, en hopelik maak jy so 'n impak dat almal beter af is later.

23. het ek niks agteruitgestaan vir die manne nie. Ons het op die plaas net 'n boorgat gehad, en ons moes met 'n handpomp pomp. En die oudste drie was dogters. So jy pomp!

24. En toe, in die eerste twee-drie weke van sub B, toe sê hulle nee wat, ek sit en verveel my net, en toe's ek oor.

25. Ek het my pa baie kwalik geneem.

26. My tweede onderwyspos—daar was baie manspersoneel. En kan ek vir jou sê—daar's mans, en-en dit is nie 'n grief nie, maar ek het—ek wil amper sê, ek het met hulle koppe gestamp, ek het nie my mond gehou nie. Die rede daarvoor—weet jy, dat elkeen van hulle het 'n addisionele byverdienste. Ry 'n bus hier, doen dat, dan kan hulle nie sport, of wat nou ookal afrig nie. Ons vrouens moet die sport afrig. Toe't ek hulle nou lelik aangevat oor dit.

27. Daardie ses jaar, het vir my gebring waar ek vandag is. Al die bestuursvaardighede geleer. En die toepassing daarvan—finansiële aspekte, boerderybestuur en al daai goed.

28. Daar het ek geklim tot acting principal. Vir my was dit nogal baie wonderlik. Die prinsipaal sê hy't my grootgemaak in die pos. Ek het elke vakansie saam met hom gewerk. Niemand is daar nie, maar dan het ek en hy die recruitment gedoen, die administrasie gedoen. Ons het vakansies gewêrk. En hy was net so 'n werkesel. So toe ek nou, uhm—hy was my mentor. Ja, definitief—hy het werklikwaar vir my gevorm.

29. Nee wat, die mans het ook geweet, ek tel—amper sê ek geboue op, as dit moet. En hulle aanvaar dit so. Ek sien myself as 'n man en 'n vrou. Jy weet dis so, ek het so grootgeword. En my personeel respekteer vir my regtigwaar. Ek het geen probleme nie. En ek geniet my leierskapposisie soos 'n vis in die water. Dit kom noual 'n lang pad. En ek wil nog wees waar ek is. Ek is nog nie klaar met wat ek nou nog graag in die kollege wil bereik nie.

30. Maar met die komplimente, wou hy hê ek moet ook die kos maak, en alles doen in die huis.

31. Al twee is nogal begaafde kinders.

32. En ons het nie klaskamers gehad nie. Ons het 'n basement gehad. En my man en my pa het gegaan en vir my partisies gaan insit, dat ons drie klaskamers kon maak.

33. Ons het daai hele kampus se goed getrek voor ons kon begin bou, 167 vragte. En ek het stoele rondgedra, ek het tafels aanmekaar gesit. Ek het die hele uitleg van die hele perseel gedoen, waarheen moet alles gaan. Ek het die bouprojek hanteer toe—ons het 'n argitek gehad wat dit sou doen, toe skiet hulle hom dood in die township. Toe hanteer ek die bouprojek. Ek moes quantity surveying doen, ek moes uitwerk hoeveel bakstene moet ek koop, hoeveel rafters, hoeveel corrugated iron, al daai goed moes ek uitwerk. Ek moes dit bestel, ek moes met die kontrakteurs werk, ek moes check dat hulle reg werk en bou volgens die regulasies.

34. Die kampus was in 'n vieslike toestand daar. Ek het regtigwaar moeite gedoen daarso. Die een gebou was veertien jaar oud, en sy vensters was nog nooit gewas nie, want dis hoog. Ag ek kan vir jou

foto's wys, ek kan vir jou grafieke wys. Agterna gedink, dit was 'n heerlike avontuur, maar dit was baie harde werk. Ek het self die kollege se laundry kom haal, en ek het self rommel weggery. Persoonlik. Die vorige hoof het van die ou perseel na die nuwe perseel getrek en daai goed agter slot en grendel kom stoor. So ek het die kollege se lorrie kom haal en gelaai. En gelaai. Daar was twee manlike werkers en ek het gehoor hoe sê die een vir die ander ene, hierdie djuffrou laat werk 'n mens dood. Toe ry ek nou maar, en ek koop nou die ultimate. Ek koop Kentucky en Coke, da' gaat hulle weer lank aan [...]. In elk geval, die kampus is skoongemaak, die kommunikasie is reggestel, ek het die—die klaskamers het nie aansteekborde gehad nie. Hulle het nie vullisdromme gehad nie. Sommer 'n boks wat die deksels afgeskeur is. So dit lyk klaar na rommel, so nou smyt ons maar die goed langsaan. Die mense het nie skoongemaak nie. Die uhm—so, hulle is toe die Aprilvakansie huis toe, [ek het] industriële skropmasjiene gehuur. Daai vloerteëls wat nog nooit geskrop is nie, skoon geskrop, die klaskamers alles laat uitverf. Die aansteekborde laat aanbring. Die snippermandjies aangekoop, die witborde is aangebring, alles—in daai week het ek die gange laat skoonry en al die goed weggery. Jy sal nie glo watter verskil dit aan die personeel se psige gemaak het toe hulle terugkom nie.

35. Kan ek vir jou sê, daardie gebou op [naam van stad]—ons het daardie gebou opgerig. Maar uhm, die—ek moes alle logistieke goed—uh, [name of principal] het na die bouwerk gekyk. Ek moes al die goed order [sic], die stoele, die tafels, die toest—jy weet, alles moes ek doen by die verskaffers. En dit was 'n leerskool vir my.

36. Maar weet jy, wat ons gedoen het—en sonder om vergoeding te vra. Dis nou hoekom ek—ek het 'n broertjie dood aan almal moet vir alles betaal word. [...] Toe ons die nuwe kampus op kollege gebou het—toe hy klaar gebou is, toe's dit 'n dop. Toe moet ons mos nou—die toerusting het ons darem nou gekry, maar die saal en die kafeteria was 'n dop. En daar was nie flood lights nie, want ons het—sport was nogal vir ons baie belangrik, so ek het al die pad sport afgerig. En ons het nie hierdie floodlights, spreiligte gehad nie. Toe het [name of principal] se vrou en twee van die kantoorpersoneel en ek—ons het toe 'n span gevorm. Ons het elke naweek—elke naweek het ons spyseniering gedoen. Vir 280, 250 mense. Ons het al die troues gedoen. Ons het seminare gedoen en alles. En die voorbereiding—ons het Donderdae die goed gaan koop en Vrydagmiddae het ons al begin met die voorbereiding. En dan Saterdagoggend het ons nou alles, jy weet, klaargemaak. Ek het my op gewerk daarvoor. Maar dit was vir my lekker. Dit was vir my lekker om 'n bydrae te kon lewer, want dis omtrent elke naweek gewees. Ons het baie geld geïen. Ons het—al daai goed wat ons wou doen, het ons volledig toegegerus.

37. My man help my partykeer even [sic]. Nee, ek kan nie vir jou sê wat hy al alles gedoen het nie [...]. Hy-hy en my pa het gegaan en vir my partisies gaan insit, dat ons drie klaskamers kon maak. Hy't gaan help om goed op te sit vir die danse.

38. Dis die ding. Myne is op 'n ander manier [...]. Dan lê ek vir vyf dae in die hospitaal. Dis soos stress my vreet. So ek het my eetplan heeltemal verander. Dit het 'n bietjie gehelp. Ek is so nou en dan stout, maar ek het my eetplan heeltemal, heeltemal verander.

39. Ek wil glo dis dalk daai investering [gewees].

40. Toe ek swanger raak, toe't ek nou vir sewe jaar nie skoolgehou nie. Want ek wou kinders grootgemaak het. Dit was ook deel van daai tyd se verwagtinge. Maar dis wat ek wou doen. So dit was nou nie 'n uhm, 'n kwessie nie. Ek weet nie of ek gebreinspoel was en dat ek daarom dink ek wou dit doen nie. Dit was net—ek weet nie, maar ek wou. Ek wou en as ek my lewe kan oorhê, sal ek—ons het groot finansiële opofferinge gemaak. Ons het ons huis verkoop en 'n huis gehuur om daai paalement kleiner te maak. My man het gewerk en studeer. So ja, dit is nie vrolike tye finansieel nie, maar andersins was dit absoluut geseënd. En ek sal nooit ruil nie. My een kind is xx, my ander kind is xx, en hulle is mal daaroor om huis toe te kom, of vice versa. Ons hou saam vakansie, en ons kuier oor en weer. Ek wil graag glo dis dalk daai investering. Ek weet nie.

41. Dit was die [portfoliobestuurders van die ses kolleges]—en ek was die enigste vroulike persoon daar—in die begin. Uh, [name of portfolio manager] daar by [naam van kollege], en so aan, en dit het my grensloos geïrriteer, want ek is die voorsitter, ek moet die agenda opstel, ek moet die notule hou, ek moet alles op skrif sit, ensovoorts. En ek het net besluit, ag nee weet jy wat, dit-dit troos my nie dat hulle verbale insette kon lewer nie; mens moet doen ook. So, dit—toe't ek onttrek daarvan en toe't dit ook sommer gesterf [...].

42. As EXCO was dit vir my maar weereens hierdie, uh, die verbale insette, maar moenie verwag dat die mans gaan uitgaan om 'n dingetjie te tik, of wat ookal nie. Ek weet nie of dit 'n algemene mansding is nie. Dis beslis nie my man se ding nie. Hy is—het alles gedoen. Uhm, ek kan daarmee saamleef, mits daar 'n balans is. Ek sal die tikwerk doen, maar dan wil ek waarde hê uit jou insette. Jy weet, so—ja—. Maar ek laat my nie keer nie, as ek nie wil nie, dan sal ek nie.

43. Ek het my doodgewerk. Want my kwaliteit—wat ek sien as kwaliteit, en 'n ander mens se kwaliteit kan verskil. En dit het vir my so afgesit, dat ek mense se werk moes oordoen. Ons het vakansies gewerk. Ek het my opgewerk vir die fondsinsamelings.

44. Toe eendag, toe—altans daar was toe 'n tydelike pos wat gevul moet word. Wat ook deur al die manne beset was. Ek is toe nou amper soos die HoDs van nou – 'n departementshoof [...]. As vrou kry ek toe nou die pos, maar nou tydelik vir daai periode. Maar een van die mans, [name of staff member], het nogal vir my gesê [...], 'ja, dis mos julle vroue wat al die'—wag, hoe nou? 'Wat al die goedjies doen wat raakgesien moet word, en-en dan kry julle die poste'. Ek sê toe vir hom, 'weet jy [name of staff member], ek sal my mond hou'—ek het niks vir hulle teëgestaan nie—'ek sal my mond hou as ek jy is, want jy genereer smiddae ekstra inkomste deur die skoolbus te ry'—ons het seweur begin, want dis warm en ons het eenuur opgehou—ek sê, 'eenuur dan loop jy sonder 'n sak of 'n tas in jou hand. Jy berei niks voor nie. En ek doen my voorbereiding en ek doen nog sport'.

45. Of daar sal—wat ek ook gevind het, is dat—die oomblik wat jy 'n voorstel maak en op die tafel neersit, dan gee hulle jou 'n harde tyd. Waar as dit 'n man is wat die voorstel op die tafel sit, sal hulle vinnig [stemtoon baie hoog] daaroor brush, en gaan aan. En aanvaar dit. En ek het dit—en ek sien dit nou nog. Ek sien nou nog as die prinsipale saam met die regional office vergader, en [name of a senior women official at DHET] iets op die tafel sit, dan grind hulle vir haar. Want dit grens vir my amper

partykeer aan ongeskiktheid. Want hulle is nie oop om te luister nie. Ek vind dat mans nie baie goed luister nie. Hulle is nie ontvanklik vir nuwe idees nie.

46. As die man die voorstel maak, is dit reg. As ek die voorstel maak, dan lag hulle dit af.

47. Ek dink dit sal jy interessant vind—is dat die-die mans op deputy-vlak hou alles teen hulle bors. Hulle deel niks. Soos byvoorbeeld, uhm, ten spyte daarvan dat jy in vergaderings vra, ‘maar wat is die finansiële status van die kollege, waar staan ons met finansies?’ so-aan, word daai inligting nie met jou gedeel nie. Of jy kry sulke snippets van die inligting.

48. Ek wil graag glo dat ek die bevordering op meriete gekry het, maar ek kan nie vir jou sê of die equity-wetgewing my gehelp het nie. Praat kom vir my maklik, [hopelik was] ek goed genoeg in die onderhoud.

49. Ek moes dikwels drie mense se werk in die sektor tegelyktydig doen.

50. Maar ek het altyd gevoel ek baklei teen die glasplafon. En ek het altyd gesê, ‘al kraak ek hom net, dat die volgende persoon kan deurgaen, is dit ook fine met my’. Maar ek sal bly stamp teen, en-en uitdaging bied om deur te breek.

51. Wanneer ek iets doen, dan wil ek die meester wees van wat ek doen. En dan skryf ek eenvoudig in vir ‘n kursus, en bo en behalwe alles, dan doen ek nog dit ook, want dit bemagtig jou.

52. Wat my wel tydens my onderhoude gepla het, was dat uhm, ‘n stereotipe, wanneer jy ‘n stereotipe uhm, jou rating doen, dan—as jy iemand nie wil inhê nie, you vote them low. Dis maar net hoe dit werk. So ek kan nou nie sê dit het gebeur, of dit het nie gebeur nie, maar ek dink dat ten minste een van die CEO-poste—dit was vir my asof daar alreeds ‘n besluit was dat die huidige prinsipaal aangestel sou word. Dit was in die ‘grapevine’. In die ‘grapevine’ het mense vir jou gesê, ‘hoekom doen jy aansoek?’ want ons het gehoor hulle gaan hierdie een vir daai pos aanstel, en hierdie een vir daai pos aanstel. En as jy nou terugkyk na die ses CEOs wat daai tyd aangestel was, was dit drie wit mans, twee kleurling mans en een swart vrou. Ek dink as jy gaan kyk na die deputies wat daai tyd aangestel was, dan gaan jy ook ‘n interessantheid sien. Iemand soos die vise-prinsipaal, vroeër van [stad in ander provinsie] wat briljant sou wees as ‘n deputy, het nooit ‘n deputy-pos gekry nie. So daar was beslis ‘horses for courses’. Ja, regte tyd, regte plek.

53. En byvoorbeeld, ek het altyd—vir die akademiese raadsvergadering het ons ‘n verslag ingegee van wat aangaan in [naam van haar portefeulje]. En dan het ons ‘n aparte verslag ingegee wat na die kollegeraad toe gegaan het. En toe die nuwe prinsipaal gekom het, toe’t hy besluit, ten spyte daarvan dat ons die verslag geskryf het, én dat ek die verslag geskryf het wat op die kollegeraad moes dien—het hy hom uit die pak uitgehaal en gesê, hy’t besluit daai verslag hoef nie meer te dien nie. Die mans gee nie verslae in nie. Hulle doen nie. Ons het besluite geneem op die vergaderings, en dan gaan ons terug. Dan gee ek terugvoering van wat ek gedoen het, dan het die ander niks gedoen nie. En so het dit gegaan—jaar in, jaar uit, jaar in, jaar uit. En dan kry een van daai mense die prinsipaalpos. Die siel het my opgemaak.

54. Ons is twee deputy vrouens en dan twee mans. Ek was dus nooit die enigste vrou in 'n Executive Managers' vergadering nie. Ek wil sê—omdat ek al so lank by [naam van kollege] is, was ek as [name of portfolio] manager—ek is die eerste personeellid wat by die hoofkantoor aangesluit het. Dit was die destydse hoof en sy sekretaresse. En ek was die eerste persoon wat soontoe beweeg het. So, ek was daar voor enige ander deputy of registrar, of wat ook al. En ek het baie geweet van die geamalgameerde kollege, want ek was maar die klankbord vir die hoof. En ontwikkel die ding saam, en, en, en. Ek is baie goed met skryf [...]. So mettertyd bemaagtig jy jouself sonder dat jy dit besef. [Naam van vorige prinsipaal] het—kon nie, soos [naam van huidige prinsipaal] altyd sê, [naam van vorige prinsipaal] sou jou nooit gelos het nie, of nooit die vergadering gehou het sonder jou nie, so ek was altyd deel van die EXCO [Executive Committee]. So toe ek deputy word—dit was 'n formaliteit. In full hindsight—gender transformation. Nou dat ek waarneem in die prinsipaalpos—ek vermy die prinsipale-vergaderings soos die pes [laughter]. Nee, daar was twee vergaderings van hierdie aard en ek het ons deputy vir finansies gevra—'luister, jy't mos gesê jy sal my help. Man, gaan jy, daar gaat jy!' Ek het die [male dominated] prinsipale-vergaderings vermy, want ek is pragmaties. Daar's net vier-en-twintig uur – jy moet maksimum inprop. En ek het nie lus om te sit en luister na praat en praat en praat nie. Ek was mos nou al by hoeveel van hierdie vergaderings. So, as—sê ek was die prinsipaal, dan sou ek gegaan het, en sou ook nie dikbek gewees het nie, dis deel van die prentjie. Nou het ek 'n keuse. En ek het ontsettend baie hooi op my vurk. So ek kies om nie nou te gaan nie. So dis nie dat ek nou met 'n lang lip sou gaan nie. Dis ook nie asof ek dit vermy omdat dit 'n klomp mans is nie.

55. Toe ek inkom, want hulle het—die raad het vir my mos nou 'n onderhoud gevoer en uh, een van die dinge wat ek gesê het, is dat—dit het ook gegaan oor die finansiële ondervinding, wat—jy weet—, die raad wou by my weet of ek die manspersoneel kan hanteer. Net so. Ek het vir hulle gesê dat ek het dit al jare— al die jare van my lewe hanteer ek hulle, want 'n mens moet net weet hoe om 'n man te hanteer [laughter]. Nee, ek het gesê, 'ek het geen probleem met 'n man nie, want by my is dit—dit gaan oor die kwaliteit produk wat ons lewer'. Dis wat ek bygevoeg het. En hulle het my aangestel.

56. Toe—weet jy wat, ons het toe 'n class action geregistreer. En toe—ons is toe vyf wat saam baklei. Ek het die brief gestuur na die vakbonde toe. Ek het die vakbond genader en hulle het vir my gehelp met die class action. Eintlik het sy [die vakbondpersoon] dit voorgestel. Maar uh, daar was uh, die persoon wat nou vir ons gehelp het, sê toe, 'as julle vyf is, dan maak ons dit 'n class action'. En almal was in dieselfde bootjie. Ons het almal reeds 'n hele ruk in die pos ge-act en hulle mag ons nie sommer uitskop uit ons poste nie. Maar dit was nogals interessant. My kollega is mos passievol. Sy het—die man [by die Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement] wat nou eintlik vir ons ken, het gesê, hulle ken nou eintlik nie ons werk nie. Hulle werk net met die prinsipaal. My kollega sê toe, 'ek praat nooit weer met jou nie'. Maar kyk, daardie jare—ja, dit was nou in 2008. Toe's ons tog aangestel, omdat hulle die saak verloor het. Ja, WKOD het die saak verloor en ons het gewen.

57. In my pos as senior vise-rektor, waar ek gekyk het na HR, administrasie en akademie, was ek die caretaker-prinsipaal by [naam van buurkollege]. Want die departement in [naam van provinsie] onderwysdepartement het my daai tyd gevra, wil ek hulle nie gaan help nie, want hierdie kollege se

prinsipaal is siek, en die twee administratiewe mense wat na die kollege moes kyk, is ge-dismiss, want hulle het geld gesteel. So ek het in die oggend gery van die huis af [naam van buurkollege] toe. Dit was 'n klein kollege, 35 personeellede, 480 studente. Dan't ek met hulle gesit en ons het beplan wat moet gebeur deur die dag, en ek het terugvoering gekry, wat het gebeur die vorige dag. Dan't ek kantoor toe gegaan. Dan't ek gecheck dat al die finansies gedoen was vir die vorige dag. So by half tien, dan ry ek [naam van eie kollegekampus in buurdorp] toe. Dan gaan kyk ek of die goed afgelewer is wat ek bestel het. Ek praat met die bouers en die kontrakteurs. Dan gaan ek kantoor toe, bestel die volgende goed, werk met my spanne, kry ek terugvoering en drie uur in die middag dan ry ek terug [naam van buurkollege] toe. Toe was ek tweede in bevel van [naam van eie kollege]. Ja, ek was redelik georganiseerd, baie. En toe ek by [naam van buurkollege] was—hulle het 'n Koltechstelsel gehad, maar hulle het niks van hulle studente gecapture op Koltech nie. Hulle het nie hulle finansies en boeke gedoen vir drie jaar nie. Hulle ouditeursverslae wat hulle gehad het, was fraudulent. Vir drie jaar. En die personeel was so 'n gemengde groep. So ek het 'n senior lektor gehad wat gekyk het na alles. Sy was 'n vrou. En hulle het popular music en sake studies aangebied. Maar dit was chaos, want as jy daar kom tienuur, dan loop almal [stemtoon styg]. Daar was geen werksetiek nie. Die gras het so [wys heuphoogte] hoog gestaan toe ek daar instap. Plafonne het gate ingehad, die geute het uitmekaar uit geval. As hulle bank toe gaan om geld te gaan deponeer, dan raak daar 'n duisend rand elke keer weg voordat hulle by die bank kom. Die boeke was nie gedoen nie—petty cash kom die ou, dan krap hy so in sy sakke, dan gooi hy die petty cash so. Ons het teruggegaan. Van die studentekaarte en die kwitan—hulle het darem kwitansieboeke gehou. En alles was in miscellaneous files gefile. Daar was tien of twaalf op die rak, en jy moes weet in watter maand en watter jaar het iets aangekom om dit min of meer te kry. So ons het daai filing system uitgesorteer, ons het die boeke terugwerkend gedoen deur studentekaarte, kwitansieboeke en bankdepositoboekte te gebruik. Ons het die petty cash terugwerkend gedoen. Toe't ons alles laat oudit vir drie jaar. Ons het die gras gesny, en dan sny hulle gras, en dan kom hulle—vyf minute, dan sê hulle vir my, 'die grassnyer is stukkend'. Dan sê ek, 'laai hom in die kar, vat hom dat hulle hom regmaak'. Dan bring hulle hom terug. Môre dan breek hy weer. Dan sê ek, 'sit hom in die kar, julle twee gaan die geld tel vir die bank-opmaak, en julle twee gaan bank toe. So as daar geld wegraak, dan betaal julle dit in. Dis hoe dit werk'. Binne agtien maande het ek hulle omgedraai. Hulle [die buurkollege] was in die moeilikheid. Hulle was finansiële in die moeilikheid. Toe ek daar weg—toe ek nou hier Wes-Kaap toe kom, toe't hulle Rxxx xxx in die bank.

58. Maar ek bedoel, ons almal, ons is almal baie oop vir mekaar. Uhm, daar is nou mense wat se stem meer gehoor wil word as 'n ander ene, maar ek steur my nie daaraan nie. Ek het ook baie in my—en ek wil nie name noem nie, maar ek wil vir jou sê, by [naam van kollege] kry ek nogal van die CEO baie ondersteuning. Maar dis vir my baie lekker, en kyk—hy't 'n manier om oor te kom wat partykeers, jy weet—maar weet jy, ek kyk verby dit. En ek sien eerder die mens—ek het regtig gesien die afgelope tyd—en hy't vir my gehelp met die interdik, 'n voorbeeld van die interdik. Hy het vir my baie gehelp. So dit was vir my nogal 'n mooi ervaring gewees [...]. Die een vroulike CEO het sterk beg—nie beginsels wil ek dit noem nie—maar het-het nogals, sy kan baie keer raak opsom [...]. Maar elkeen van ons het 'n eiesoortige persoonlikheid. Ons vroue. Maar die manne is nogal versorgend teenoor ons. Dit het ek



gesien. Veral [names of two male CEOs]. Weet jy, hulle het al drie vir my gebel en gesê, ons hoor julle het ook nou dit [student unrest]. Uhm, jy moet net—en hulle het raad gegee, en wat nou ookal, maar ook vir my gesê, ‘moenie dit persoonlik opneem nie’. Ek is nie so ‘n mens wat dit persoonlik opneem nie, maar dit was mos nou maar stresvol vir die personeel, jy weet. Maar al die, daai drie, nie van die vrouens nie, die drie manne het vir my ondersteun. Met my eie damespersoneel het ek ‘n baie, baie goeie verhouding.

59. ons twee het saam mekaar ondersteun aan ‘n manne-projek

60. Maar onthou, ek is as vise-prinsipaal aangestel daar. Maar onder ‘n mansprinsipaal. Ek en nog ‘n dame in posvlak twee het saam aansoek gedoen. En ons het baie lekker saamgewerk. Ons het mekaar wonderlik aangevul. Weet jy, dit was baie lekker. Sy was nie bang vir werk nie. Maar innoverend. Ek hou van innoverende mense. Weet jy wat het sy reggekry? Sy—toe was ek nou al prinsipaal, toe het uhm—daai jare is die kurrikulum, of wat ookal, was seker ‘n bietjie verander, maar dit het toe gegaan oor hierdie occupational—die skills en learnerships. Splinternuut in daai tyd. En dit was seker in 2002. Ja, maar ek kan nou nie die presiese datum onthou nie. Weet jy toe [name of previous CEO] nou af is, het die raad vir my gesê—want ek was mos nou tweede in bevel—het die kollegeraad vir my gesê, hulle wil daai Maandag, my strategiese plan vir die kollege vorentoe hê. Ek het daai hele naweek my plan uitgewerk, en ingesluit daarby, het ek toe die uhm, die skills goeters gesit. Maar [name of colleague] het dit gevestig en gedryf. Ons het so aan die anderkant van die brandweer in die steengroewe ‘n learnership begin. So dit is nou ‘n gender storie. Ons twee het saam mekaar ondersteun aan ‘n manne-projek. Ons het saamgewerk. Ons het regtigwaar—ek wil vir jou sê, daar was ‘n invloed van beide kante af op mekaar, want Deona is net so gedrewe. Daar was geen jaloesie nie. Altyd ondersteun, my nooit probeer intimideer of ‘n verterende ambisie gehad om my te ondermyn nie. Sy het wel baie ambisie gehad, maar die verhouding tussen ons twee het presies dieselfde gebly na ek die prinsipaalpos by die geamalgameerde kollege gekry het. Opregte, ek wil amper sê belangstelling in mekaar en ondersteuning vir mekaar. Dit het ek ervaar. Daar was nooit enige—kyk ek het haar—toe [name of previous CEO] uit is, het ek vir haar onmiddellik in ‘n posvlak drie pos gekry, en sy het toe die ander kampus bestuur. Sy, sy’t haarself uitgeleef. Ek het baie ondersteuning gehad.

61. Dit was die [portfoliobestuurders van die ses kolleges]—en ek was die enigste vroulike persoon daar. Dit [die netwerkgeleentheid] het my grensloos geïrriteer, want ek is die voorsitter, ek moet die agenda opstel, ek moet die notule hou, ek moet alles op skrif sit. En ek het net besluit, ag nee weet jy wat, dit-dit troos my nie dat hulle verbale insette kon lewer nie; mens moet doen ook. So, dit—toe’t ek onttrek daarvan en toe’t dit ook somer gesterf.

62. Toe kom ek nou met die lorrie by die herwinningsplek, maar dis—hier’s ‘n gebou, en hier’s ‘n gebou [sy beduie na links en regs]. Die skrootwerf is daar agter. So die vragmotor kan nie binne—dis nie ‘n baie groot ene nie. Hy’t ‘n breë bak en kan nie binne draai nie. So hy moet nou die hele ent agteruit. Maar ek het op ‘n plaas grootgeword met ‘n Bedford. Jy weet jy kan mos nou! Maar daar is mans op daai skrootwerf—seker tien na twaalf! En al tien of twaalf dink hulle moet nou vir my wys hoe om te ry—voor en agter. Nee, hulle wys verniet! En ek ignoreer hulle, ek kyk in die spieëltjie en toe ek nou sien

ek is veilig deur, amper deur, toe gun ek daai lorrietjie dat hy sommer so “woerrrrr” agtertoe—jy sien net manne spat.

63. en ja, dit het vrugte afgewerp.

64. toe sê ek, ‘jy bring net nooit weer vir my blomme nie. Maar jy doen ook nie weer wat jy gedoen het nie’. En daarvandaan is ons dik pelle.

65. ek kan mos nie vir hierdie vrou iets sê nie.

66. Hy’t net altyd met my baklei. Ons kantore was langs mekaar. En as ek inkom—hy was ongeskik met my, hy’t my nie ‘n dag se tyd gegee nie, en toe een oggend het ek net genoeg gehad. Toe loop ek na sy kantoor en toe sê ek, ‘gaan ons nou elke dag van die res van ons werksure met mekaar baklei as ons mekaar sien? Kan ons nie mekaar net professioneel behandel nie?’ En van daar af moet ek sê het dit baie beter gegaan. Maar ek het ook geleer jy moet hulle direk konfronteer. Direk konfronteer. Nee-nee, jy skiet nie met biskruit nie. Kyk, daar’s ‘n baie interessante ander ding wat hulle vir jou sê mos. Hulle sê mos jy moet mense se prestasie celebrate. In ‘n groep. Maar as jy reprimand, of as jy ‘n probleem het om met iemand uit te sorteer, altyd one-to-one. Altyd. Iemand raas, een-tot-een. So dis maar deel van jou strategieë. En ek het baie gereedskap gekry deur die jare. Ek het baie kursusse gaan bywoon. Ek het “the six thinking hats” van Debono gaan bywoon: lateral thinking, diversity management, change management. So ek dink dat, vir enige bestuurder, en regtig nie net vrou-man bestuurder nie, vir enige bestuurder—jy moet sorg dat jy soveel moontlik vaardighede aanleer. Jy moet soos ‘n toolbox vol vaardighede hê, wat—as jy in moeilike situasies land, jy ander goed kan probeer, en nie moedeloos raak nie, en nie emosioneel raak nie. Kyk, en dan wat ‘n mens ook moet oppas voor, is as jy— as iemand jou aanvat, dat jy nie emosioneel raak nie. Want die mans mag, maar die vroue mag nie. So ek het altyd gesê, jy tel tot tien, maar jy tel tot ‘n duisend as jy moet.